

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban unionists discuss
key role of working class

— PAGES 8-9

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Anti-gay law struck down; Clinton vows to sign another

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

In a 6-3 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down on May 20 a Colorado constitutional amendment that not only nullified existing civil rights protections for homosexuals in the state but also barred the passage of new anti-discrimination laws.

"The court has mistaken a Kulturkampf [culture war] for a fit of spite," said Justice Antonin Scalia in his dissenting opinion.

Two days later, President William Clinton

**Support civil rights for gays!
No to youth curfews!**

**Statement by Socialist
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announced he would sign a bill that in effect bans same-sex marriages.

The Supreme Court ruling provides gay rights advocates with new legal ammunition in their continuing fight against the ban on homosexuals in the military and other discriminatory measures. It also protects existing provisions in nine states and more than 100 cities that prohibit anti-gay bias on the job, housing market, public accommodations, and elsewhere.

"Today the court gave all gay people in

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Socialists appeal to workers to fund election campaign

BY MEGAN ARNEY

NEWARK, New Jersey — In week five of the drive to raise \$90,000 for the Socialist Workers 1996 Campaign of James Harris for U.S. president and Laura Garza for vice-president, nearly \$20,000 has been collected. Supporters in Greensboro, Philadelphia, Twin Cities, and Detroit are at the top of the chart, and are ahead of schedule. But as the figures accompanying this article show, the collection and amounts pledged fall short of what is needed nationally to continue the campaign and take maximum advantage of the openings it presents.

Greg McCartan, the national Socialist Workers campaign director, is encouraging supporters to raise funds well over the original goal. He announced a two-week extension of the drive — until July 1 — in order to raise additional money. More than \$90,000 is needed, he explained, in light of opportunities to put forward a working-class voice in the elections and the stepped-up involvement of the Young Socialists (YS) in national campaign responsibilities. Supporters of the campaign can use the extra time to reach even more people interested in supporting the Socialist Workers in the election.

As part of the YS taking on more responsibility, Jack Willey, a member of the group's National Committee, will be traveling to California to help supporters there bring the campaign to a range of actions taking place in the state. Willey pointed to plans for pro-

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France: Reduce work week to create jobs

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — "Massively reduce work time to create jobs," read the lead banner at the head of the May 23 union demonstration here. The banner expressed the theme of the national day of actions and demonstrations throughout France called by the French Confederation of Democratic Labor (CFDT) and supported by other unions, particularly the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). The CFDT calls for reducing the work week to 32 hours. The CGT calls for a 35 hour week with no cut in pay. The current work week is 39 hours.

The Paris demonstration drew more than 10,000 people in the middle of a working day. Workers in a number of shops took part in work stoppages so that they could demonstrate.

The march was the first of a series of national actions called by different unions over the next few weeks. On May 29 several independent unions including one of the teachers' unions, have called a national day of action and a demonstration in Paris.

The next day there will be a demonstration of retired workers called by the retired workers' sections of four different trade union confederations.

On June 4 the telecommunication workers of France Télécom will be out on a one-day national strike. France Télécom is a public service company that the government of Prime Minister Alain Juppé has threatened to privatize. June 5 will be the turn of the gas and electric workers. A national strike called by three unions will include a national demonstration in Paris.

The following day, June 6, will see a strike and national demonstration in Paris called by five of the federations of railway unions. The railroad workers were at the head of the

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Rally of 3,000 public workers in Dusseldorf, Germany, May 21, part of national week of protests

100,000 workers protest in Germany

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — One hundred thousand workers took part in warning strikes and other protests in Germany May 20. The stoppages were concentrated in eastern Germany. Public transport was at a standstill in Cologne, Bonn, and Düsseldorf. In Berlin day-care centers were closed in the morning. In other places garbage collectors, administrative personnel, and hospital workers walked out for a couple of hours.

Workers are demanding a 4.5 percent raise for 3.2 million public employees. As part of a package to save 50 billion D-Marks (1 DM = US\$ 1.54), the federal government is proposing a wage freeze for two years for all public employees.

The May 20 actions kicked off a week of union protests against this plan. That day metal workers in southern and southwestern Germany took part in demonstrations

against the government's plans to cut sick pay from 100 percent to 80 percent and raise the retirement age.

As the employers and unions met for a third round of negotiations, strikes continued May 22. That morning public transportation in Berlin was at a standstill, while garbage collectors and local government employees were on strike in Hamburg.

Not even an agreement on three weeks of mediation under a compulsory truce, reached during the negotiations, stopped the protests. Tens of thousands took part in work stoppages, according to the public workers union ÖTV, and public transport in cities in the Ruhr area was halted during the morning. Dieter Krause, representing ÖTV in Bochum, said these strikes had already been called when mediation was decided upon. The employers offered 0.5 percent for the next eight months and 1 percent more the following year in the May 22 negotiations.

In Sachsen, Berlin, Brandenburg, and Baden-Württemberg there were also spontaneous protests and demonstrations. "The anger is so great, people are simply letting it out," said Rudolf Winterholler, president of the ÖTV in Baden-Württemberg.

The same week the German economics ministry said the country's gross domestic product fell in the first three months of 1996, as it had in the last quarter of 1995, signaling the economy is in a recession.

Catharina Tirsén is a member of the metal workers union in Stockholm.

INS raid sparks anger; socialists back immigrants

BY JON HILLSON

MINNEAPOLIS — An early morning raid by armed Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents on workers at Northern Star Co. is provoking growing anger among union members at the potato processing plant, located in an industrial neighborhood on the border between Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The agents hauled 50 workers, most of them Mexican, out of the factory May 22, piled them into a bus to the National Guard armory in Hastings, and began deporting them. A second INS dragnet at the same time, in the St. Paul suburb of Cottage Grove, swept up 20 undocumented workers at Up North Plastics. In April, the INS seized 55 workers at a poultry processing factory in Cold Spring, about 60 miles from the Twin Cities.

"I'm really pissed off," one young Northern Star worker who is white said angrily. "This was wrong. They took a friend of mine, and his kids are still here."

The worker was one of scores who stopped to talk with Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, and his supporters during the change-over from first

to second shift on May 24.

Some of Fiske's supporters wore bilingual sandwich board signs reading "Stop the deportations!" and "Down with the INS!" that attracted immediate attention. As bosses were alerted and came out of the plant, they

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For more information see listings on Page 12

Curtis: 'Mail is high point of every day in prison' — page 13



S. Korean police attack students

Students chanted, "U.S. troops go home!" and "Washington apologize" as police fired hundreds of volleys of tear gas on 5,000 demonstrators May 26 in the South Korean capital, Seoul. The students marched on the U.S. Embassy demanding the withdrawal of Washington's troops from South Korea. Some 37,000 U.S. soldiers are stationed in South Korea. The students faced 1,200 cops in riot gear by linking arms and laying down on the street. Many students fought the cops with metal pipes. They accused Washington of supporting the deployment of South Korean paratroopers and tanks to crush an uprising in the southern city of Kwangju in 1980. Hundreds died and thousands were injured in the assault.

Elsewhere in Seoul, 40,000 people protested the governing party of South Korea, in a demonstration organized by two opposition parties.

Strike cripples Philippine ports

Thousands of port workers crippled Manila's major seaports on May 27. Members of the National Union of Portworkers in the Philippines said the strike paralyzed at least nine major domestic ports. Business at seven of Manila North Harbor's 11 ports stopped as workers blocked entrances with forklifts, preventing cargo trucks from entering the harbors. The strike was called to protest a government move to open cargo handling business to more companies. Union spokesman Alexander Aguilar said the workers are concerned that the move would lead to the displacement of workers and reduction of their benefits.

Clinton pushes Iran oil sanctions

The Clinton administration is pushing to impose sanctions on oil investment and trade in Iran and Libya. The Senate passed a bill 99-0 that would impose penalties on U.S. and other companies that invest in oilfields in the two countries. A version of the bill that would also penalize banks financing foreign investments is currently held up in the House. Governments from Europe, Canada, and Japan have voiced opposition to the bill, saying it forces U.S. policy on the citizens of those countries and is in vio-



Cops in South Korea pushed back after attacking a May 26 protest of 5,000 students. Protesters demanded the withdrawal of 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in the country.

lation of the principles of free trade.

Last year the French oil company Total snapped up a \$600 million deal in Iran after U.S.-based Conoco was forced to drop its bid because of Washington's ban against oil development agreements in Iran. Germany is Iran's largest trading partner and has supported about \$10 billion in sales and investment of German companies in Libya. Bonn granted Tehran \$102 million in credit guarantees last year. "We have been disappointed by the lack of support from our friends and allies for our efforts to increase the economic pressure on Iran and Libya," declared C. David Welch, a state department official testifying on the bill before a committee in Congress.

Tel Aviv blockades Palestinians

Under the pretext of protecting elections set for May 29, the Israeli government announced it was tightening its military and economic blockade of the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip beginning May 26. Tel Aviv sealed off the areas in February, stopping the shipment of goods in and out of the West Bank and Gaza and

barring tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from their jobs in Israel. The blockade had recently been eased to allow older workers to enter Israel, but will now be applied to everyone except for senior Palestinian officials and medical emergencies.

Chechnya cease-fire signed

Chechen leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and Russian prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed a treaty May 27 to halt the 18-month war in Chechnya. The agreement, signed in Moscow, said hostilities will end May 31, all hostages will be released, and negotiations will continue on all matters in dispute. The question of independence for the southern republic and a timetable for the withdrawal of tens of thousands of Russian troops have not been resolved. As part of his campaign for re-election, Russian president Boris Yeltsin has been promising to end the unpopular war, which has killed more than 30,000 people since he sent Russian troops to crush the Chechen independence struggle in December 1994.

After Yeltsin said he would give direct orders to stop the fighting, Yandarbiyev asked whether the agreement would be fulfilled. During a previous unilateral cease-fire declared by the Russian president there was no let-up in the Russian military offensive. Russian forces continued to fight on the eve of the negotiations.

Infectious diseases kill 52 million

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced May 20 that there is an impending "global crisis" in infectious diseases. In WHO's annual report, the organization estimates more than 17 million people died of infectious diseases in 1995, including 9 million babies and young children. The report said that "old diseases" such as tuberculosis, malaria and cholera are emerging again in many parts of the world. Although many

of these diseases are preventable or treatable, the report found that treatment is becoming more difficult. According to Hiroshi Nakajima, the director of WHO, there are at least 30 new infections recorded in the last 20 decades, and no cure has yet been developed for many of them.

The report cited overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in many Third World countries as one reason for the increase. Nakajima stated, "Complacency is now costing millions of lives — lives that we have the knowledge and means to save, yet that we are allowing to trickle through our fingers."

Peruvian workers protest

Striking construction workers were attacked by the police in the Peruvian capital, Lima, May 22. The cops teargassed the demonstrators, who were part of a 24-hour national strike over salaries and labor conditions. One worker was shot. Strikers included retired workers, teachers and construction workers. Protests by municipal workers and others continued the next day.

Police attack striking teachers

As striking teachers demonstrated in Mexico City May 23, police in riot gear attacked with truncheons. The teachers, from Guerrero state, have been demanding a 100 percent pay raise to compensate for Mexico's high inflation.

Meanwhile, Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo traveled to the southern state of Chiapas, where he said he wanted to come to peace with the Zapatista National Liberation Army. Zapatista leaders say negotiations cannot proceed as long as Javier Elorriaga and Sebastián Entzín remain imprisoned on charges of "terrorism."

Anti-immigrant patrol halted

A San Diego county judge extended a temporary ban on the activities of the anti-immigrant Citizen's Patrol May 24. For nearly a month the group roamed the airport in search of undocumented immigrants, including demanding that ticket agents check passengers' identification. Latino groups filed a complaint, saying the Citizens Patrol had asked travelers for identification and had violated civil rights through intimidation. The complaint also noted that the design of the group's T-shirts aped U.S. border patrol uniforms. "There is no room for vigilantism," said Claudia Smith, an attorney with the California Rural Legal Assistance, which provides assistance to migrant workers.

FBI tightens siege in Montana

In a potential escalation of its two-month siege of a ranch near Jordan, Montana, FBI agents prepared to shut off electricity to a group called the Freemen. The standoff began March 25 when two leaders of the rightist, white supremacist group were arrested for alleged check fraud and other charges. About 20 Freemen are holed up at the ranch, surrounded by 100 federal cops.

— MEGAN ARNEY

THE MILITANT

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10,000 in Africa protest French army

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Thousands of people poured into the streets of Bangui to protest French military attacks aimed at crushing an army rebellion in the Central African Republic that began May 18. An angry crowd of 10,000 people marched to the French embassy May 23. Another 1,500 demonstrators were blocked by French soldiers from marching on the presidential palace May 25. Protesters defied a ban on public rallies, as demonstrations continued for three days.

It took Paris's forces nine days to put down the rebellion by 200 soldiers — the second in as many months in the former French colony — and the ensuing anti-imperialist protests. Most of the soldiers were returned to barracks in French army vehicles May 27, after President Ange-Félix Patassé promised they would not be prosecuted. The next day, French soldiers continued to roam the streets of the capital, rounding up the remainder of those who participated in the revolt.

About 1,200 French troops armed with tanks and helicopter gunships took positions throughout the capital city of Bangui May 20. Some 3,000 French citizens and others were evacuated in preparation for the assault. U.S. deputy defense secretary John White said May 27 that Washington was sending in 25 more marines to guard the U.S. embassy along with the 32 marines who were flown to Bangui from Freetown, Sierra Leone, six days earlier. The U.S. military recently escalated its intervention in Liberia as that country's seven-year civil war takes its toll on the population.

The French intervention included Mirage jet fighters and helicopter gunships launching volleys into Bangui. Hospital officials reported at least 50 people were killed. A

French helicopter gunship fired on a van of rebel soldiers on May 22, killing nine people. When news spread of the imperialist military assault, protesters torched a French cultural center that burned to the ground. "The people were shouting anti-French slogans," one of the evacuees told radio reporters.

The rebellious soldiers, who are called FACA or Armed Forces of Central Africa, are demanding payment of back wages and better working conditions. Many workers in the country also have not been paid for months. The uprising was the second revolt in two months over unpaid wages. FACA troops initially demanded the resignation of Patassé and of the head of the presidential guard, Col. Bedaya Djader.

Support for the leaders of the army rebellion, who have become popular heroes, reflects growing anger among African people at French domination on the continent. "What justifies this kind of presence?" asked an editorial from the Ivory Coast daily newspaper *Le Jour*. "France comes to the rescue of dictators" headlined another commentary in an Ivorian newspaper.

Since launching an assault on Gabon in 1964, Paris has militarily intervened on the African continent roughly every other year. In addition to the Central African Republic, French troops are deployed in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Senegal, Chad, Djibouti, and the Indian Ocean islands of Réunion and Mayotte. Paris has brokered so-called "military cooperation agreements" with governments of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Togo, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi.

French president Jacques Chirac vowed to maintain the 8,700 soldiers in Africa. Paris's minister of foreign assistance, Jacques Godfrain, told the *New York Times*



Youth in Bangui, Central African Republic, passes French soldier and graffiti calling French president Chirac "murderer." Resistance to French imperialism is growing.

French forces "will intervene each time an elected democratic power is overthrown by a coup d'état if a military cooperation agreement exists."

While Godfrain spoke of maintaining "the democratic state," other government officials were more blunt about Paris's hunger for Africa's mineral wealth. "When we aid a country, we must have a minimum in return," Bernard Debré, a former minister of foreign assistance, told *Jeune Afrique*. "For France, Africa is also a market. Not a captive market, certainly, but not a sieve either."

The Central African Republic is among a number of mineral-rich African countries plundered by Paris. In 1992, 74 percent of the country's exports went to France. The main exports are coffee, diamonds, timber, and cotton. Some 414,277 carats of gem diamonds, 102,306 carats of industrial diamonds, and 154.86 kilograms (1 kg = 2.2

lbs) of gold were mined in 1992. There are also significant regions of uranium.

Meanwhile, living conditions for workers and peasants in the country are worsening. Life expectancy is 42.5 years and in 1992 the adult illiteracy rate was 62 percent.

"The French colonized us, but they have seldom rendered us any services," said Gregory Mamélosson, a 35-year-old tailor. "Under their thumb, this country's economy has not developed. Meanwhile, they are exploiting us, stealing our diamonds, manipulating our leaders, and giving us nothing to show for it."

"What we were living was a disguised colonialism," remarked Appolonaire Bina Doumba, one of the protesters against the French military assault. "In every office where anything is decided here you find a Frenchman. But these events represent an end of that era."

Sinn Fein prepares for elections, all-party talks

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — Sinn Fein will show up at the venue of the all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland that will start here June 10, said Gerry Adams, the party's president. He was on the campaign trail for elections that will be held May 30 to choose 110 members to a forum and negotiation teams for the talks.

"We seek national self-determination and the unity and independence of Ireland as a sovereign state," Adams spelt out in an article in the May 23 *Irish Times*. "As part of this we want to see the end of British rule in Ireland and the creation of a new Ireland which reflects the diversity of all the people of this island."

"Tens of thousands of citizens will vote for us," the republican leader said. "We ask only that they be accorded the same rights as those who vote for other parties."

Predictions among Sinn Fein members that the party's vote will hold firm appeared confirmed by the response to Adams as he canvassed the Lower Falls area of Belfast May 25. "I want all-party talks," said one resident, "but you can't rely on the British."

"I don't think they will let Sinn Fein sit down to talks but we will give Sinn Fein the mandate," added another.

The British government continues to stick by its demand for a new Irish Republican Army (IRA) cease-fire as a precondition for Sinn Fein's inclusion in the negotiations. Prime Minister John Major has received backing for this position from all parties in the Westminster parliament. Mo Mowlam, the British Labour Party's Northern Ireland spokesperson, said that if the IRA army council reinstated its cease-fire "five minutes" before the deadline of midnight June 9, Sinn Fein should be included.

The IRA has said it will not call a cease-fire unless the talks include a point on ending

partition and are not limited to an internal settlement in the six counties of Northern Ireland, and the preconditions on republican participation are removed.

'Major has no right to a say in Ireland'

On the campaign trail with Adams was another Sinn Fein candidate, Alex Maskey. "The elections are not wanted by anyone in the nationalist community," Maskey said in an interview. "In fact they are seen as divisive when we are trying to build consensus.... John Major has no democratic right to have any say in Ireland." Despite the exclusion of Sinn Fein from preparatory talks, the Irish republican party has "set the agenda" for the elections, Maskey emphasized.

Talks between the London and Dublin governments have been dominated by the issue of Sinn Fein's inclusion, following Adams's recent statement that "Sinn Fein in the context of proper all-party talks will sign up with all of the other parties to the Mitchell Report and principles." The two governments had insisted that acceptance of the report by former U.S. senator George Mitchell, who was asked by London to prepare a report on decommissioning of IRA weapons, was a condition for participating in the all-party talks.

"If the British government, with its disastrous record of involvement in our country, with its army of occupation, with its repressive apparatus; if the loyalists with their record; or the unionists with their record; if all of these parties can sign up to Mitchell then so can Sinn Fein," Adams wrote.

Days of talks between London and Dublin have to date failed to produce a united response. According to the May 26 *Sunday Independent*, however, unionist parties anticipate that "the two governments will cobble together a makeshift agreement ... which will ensure Sinn Fein participation in talks."

Meanwhile, the elections have exposed a growing crisis among the unionist groups. No fewer than 17 parties are contesting the election on an explicitly pro-union platform. Six others accept the union with Britain as a given and raise no demands to challenge it. There has been a splintering of existing unionist parties as new organizations have

been established for the election.

In a break with recent practice, the British Conservative Party is contesting the election in its own right. Sharp exchanges have been reported between leaders of different pro-union groups. A proposal by the newly established UK Unionist Party for a "pan-unionist alliance" for the election never got off the ground.

Ian Paisley, leader of the rightist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), spelt out the fears of many in the face of this growing weakness. "If the message after May 30 goes around the world that John Hume's [Social Democratic and Labour Party] is the largest party in Northern Ireland, then the union is over and people better realize that," he warned, urging support for the DUP.

Tainted equipment used for convictions

As the election date approached the British government was still reeling from the consequences of revelations that forensic evidence used to convict a number alleged IRA volunteers in explosives-related cases was faulty. A centrifuge machine used for detecting Semtex explosives was found to

have been contaminated. It had not been fully cleaned and recalibrated since 1989.

Michael Mansfield, a prominent lawyer, has called for all the convictions in which evidence from the contaminated centrifuge was presented be overturned. Estimates vary as to the number of cases involved from 12 to 38. Other commentators have speculated that if cases in Northern Ireland were additionally involved the figure might well be over 100.

Meanwhile, London announced the transfer of republican prisoner Patrick Kelly to the Republic of Ireland. Kelly is now suffering from terminal cancer, a condition supporters say was almost certainly caused by his lack of effective medical treatment in prison. A broad campaign has demanded Kelly's release. The Dublin government had called for Kelly's transfer to a prison nearer to his family and the British government finally acceded to his transfer from Northern Ireland to Portlaoise prison, 50 miles from Dublin.

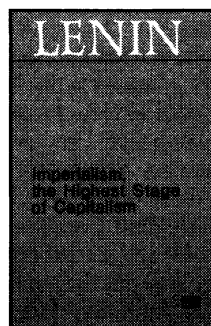
Ann Fiander from Manchester contributed to this article.

from Pathfinder

Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983-87

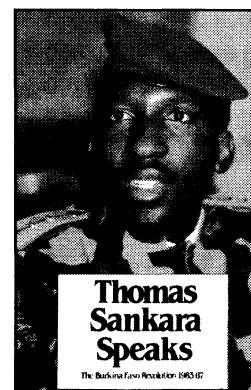
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Harris, Garza visit pickets, plant gates

BY ERIC SIMPSON

NEW YORK — On May 27, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president James Harris and supporters from New York and Boston joined thousands of workers and students for a march and rally in support of workers at Yale University fighting for a contract. Clerical workers, cooks, janitors, and researchers at Yale, members of the Federation of University Employees, have been working without a contract since January. The two locals of the union went on strike earlier this year. They returned to work but are continuing to fight to prevent the subcontracting of work to nonunion companies.

Busloads of unionists from across the Northeast took part in the event, which coincided with commencement ceremonies at Yale. Dozens of students in graduation garb joined the rally, their caps plastered with "we support Yale workers" stickers.

Socialist campaigners distributed hundreds of campaign leaflets expressing support for the Yale workers fight. They sold five subscriptions to the *Militant*, a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and about \$200 worth of books and pamphlets. In addition, four students signed up to support the campaign as Young Socialists for Harris and Garza.

Early the next morning Harris greeted dozens of Amtrak and New Jersey Transit rail workers as they changed shifts at Penn Station here. He stood by a four-foot sign announcing "Meet James Harris. Join the Socialist Campaign in '96."

Eric, a coach cleaner, quizzed Harris. "It seems to me a big problem is that the company keeps breaking down unions. Why is this?" His question opened a discussion on how working people can defend their interests today.

Another worker liked Harris's program of fighting for a shorter workweek and defending affirmative action and a woman's right to abortion, but argued vigorously that he should drop the "socialist" from the

party's name. Harris responded, "I affirm using 'socialist' because that accurately describes what our class needs." Many workers took flyers advertising Harris's public meeting later that week, and five bought copies of the *Militant*. At one point a dozen workers gathered in the break room and listened attentively to a brief address by Harris.

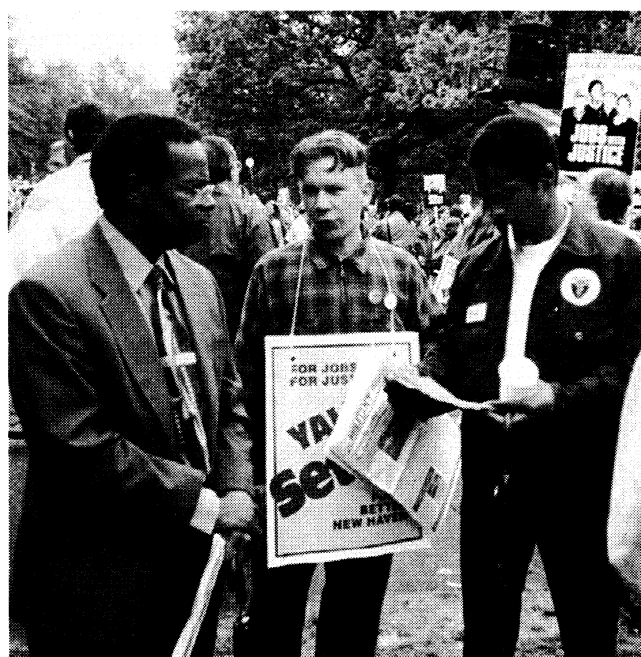
Later Harris spoke to reporters at a news conference at City Hall. Eleanor Garcia, Brock Satter, and Abby Tilsner, Socialist Workers party candidates for U.S. Congress in New York, were also on hand to answer questions.

"Interest in socialist politics is on the wane," said a reporter from the *New York Post*. "While many would agree with your proposals such as shortening the work week, isn't it more likely that a third party will come from the right?"

"Workers aren't moving to the right, the framework of ruling-class politics is moving to the right," Harris replied. "We are not trying to fix the capitalist system. We believe it is an obstacle to humanity. The only solution is a workers and farmers government, like exists in Cuba."

"You said that immigrants strengthen the working class. Aren't immigrants adding to the labor force and cheapening labor and isn't that a threat?" asked a reporter from WFUV, a radio station at Fordham University.

"Capitalists will always go where they can get the cheapest labor," Harris said. "We have to fight for unity. Workers should begin to unite to raise the wages of all. There



James Harris (left) and YS member Tom Alter (center) talk with protesters at Yale University commencement

are not too many workers, there are too many for the capitalists to make a profit from. We don't seek national solutions." A reporter from the Swiss paper *l'Hebdo* also attended the press conference.

A few days earlier, nearly 20 people turned out for a meeting with Harris at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The SWP candidate spoke about his recent trip to Cuba to attend the convention of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. A couple of the students at the meeting have

been active in building the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange planned for July. One person asked Harris about the role Cuban troops played in Angola, where they helped fight off an invasion by the apartheid South African army.

A leader of ACT-UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, also spoke in the discussion. Harris explained that the socialist campaign supports full government funding for medical care and AIDS research.

Jason Coughlin, Ruth Robinett, and Brian Taylor contributed to this article.

BY TIM MAILHOT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Speaking at a gathering of campaign supporters here May 24, Socialist Workers vice-presidential candidate Laura Garza attacked the move by congress to increase the minimum wage \$.90 over the next few years. "For working people, this is no relief. It simply means going from poverty level wages to — poverty level wages. Then, while the two parties of the rich pat themselves on the back for this 'generosity,' they continue with their program of cutbacks of social programs and attacks on democratic rights. What we need is a minimum wage at union scale — \$12 an hour. What we need is a 30 hour work week at 40 hours pay. What we need is cash benefits for those who are unemployed or unable to work, not vouchers, food stamps, or means testing."

As an example of the threats to democratic fights that are looming, Garza pointed to an article she saw in the newspaper that

Continued on Page 12

Campaign fund extended

Continued from front page

tests and an immigrant rights march at the Republican convention in San Diego as examples of the fights campaign supporters are looking to link up with. "These demonstrations are being led by Latino workers and youth," he said.

At the Young Socialists national convention in April, the group decided to endorse the Socialist Workers 1996 campaign and seek out other youth who would also back the alternative to the parties of war, racism, and economic depression. YS members are helping to organize national tours of the candidates and produce a campaign T-shirt.

"We also want to go where we have the potential to recruit to the YS," Willey said, "like Denver. Some youth from there came to the YS convention this spring. By getting back to them we will not only support the Socialist Workers campaign, but recruit to the communist movement." Campaign supporters in Denver have already begun meeting to discuss how to reach the broadest number of people with information about the socialist alternative.

One of the main tasks of the YS in the next period, Willey said, is to build the international active workers and socialist educational conference that will be held in Oberlin, Ohio, in July (see ad on front page).

McCartan reported that the national campaign committee will be producing a new four-page handout at the beginning of June. This inexpensive flyer can be given out on plant-gates, at work, at school and on campaign tables. Copies can be ordered from the campaign office.

Contributions to the fund made it possible to hold a national press conference by Harris and Garza, which was televised on the C-SPAN program, "The Road to the White House." The show was aired nationally three times. An article also appeared in the English-language *Tehran Times*, in Iran.

Over the next couple weeks, Harris will continue his campaign tour, heading to Boston, Newark, and then traveling to the Midwest. Garza will visit Miami, Atlanta, Seattle, and stop in Vancouver, Canada.

"An important part of the campaign is the drive for ballot status," said McCartan. "Supporters are organizing to get Harris and Garza on the ballot in at least 12 states."

In Newark, supporters have reached their goal of collecting 1,600 signatures to put the socialist ticket on the ballot in New Jersey. They petitioned at campaign tables in working-class neighborhoods, on college campuses, and on the job. New Jersey will be the first state where Harris and Garza will be on the ballot. Volunteers are needed now to collect 7,500 signatures to put the candidates on the ballot in Alabama. Supporters are also needed in early July for drives in New York and the District of Columbia.

Contribute to the Socialist Workers \$90,000 1996 Campaign Fund

Area	Goal	Paid	Percent
Philadelphia	4,500	3,252	72%
Detroit	3,500	1,830	52%
Twin Cities	5,000	2,431	49%
Greensboro	1,500	690	46%
Pittsburgh	5,000	1,800	36%
Des Moines	600	211	35%
Miami	2,000	560	28%
Brooklyn	7,000	1,860	27%
San Francisco	10,000	1,983	20%
Peoria	1,200	210	18%
Washington, D.C.	2,000	340	17%
Newark	5,000	830	17%
Houston	2,000	320	16%
Birmingham	3,200	495	15%
Seattle	5,000	760	15%
Morgantown	500	75	15%
Los Angeles	8,000	1,027	13%
New York	7,000	741	11%
Boston	3,500	370	11%
Atlanta	2,000	150	8%
Cleveland	1,200	25	2%
Chicago	5,000	0	0%
Salt Lake	2,000	0	0%
TOTAL	86,700	19,960	23%
SHOULD BE	90,000	39,600	44%

Candidate blasts INS raid

Continued from front page

were disregarded by groups of workers on the sidewalk, or in cars, who stopped, asking Fiske and his campaigners for flyers.

Many workers told Fiske their stories of what had happened in the plant. "I've only been here [at Northern Star] for a few weeks," a young Black woman explained, shaking her head, "this [raid] is kind of like slavery."

Another Black worker, like many co-workers in the Teamster organized plant, rejected the claim that "illegals" should be seized and expelled from the country. "You should be able to work where you live. You should be able to work where you want. They shouldn't do what they did to human beings, period." Several union members told socialists how the bosses set up the INS raid in the plant of 450 workers, 250 of whom are Latino and 100 Black.

On May 21, management posted a sign for a "mandatory" meeting to test fire drill procedures between midnight and first shift changes the next day. "They tricked us," a young Mexican worker said. "They got us into the lunchroom, and they locked the doors. The INS came in and began to ask people where they were born. They asked for papers."

The immigration cops surrounded the plant as well. Several workers reported the agents pushed and shoved the men and women they identified as "illegal," placing plastic handcuffs on their wrists.

"I'm very upset," a young Chicana from Texas said. "I used to think they [employers] were pretty nice, but not any more."

Frictions between a layer of workers and foremen had been running high in the plant. "Many workers saw a foreman hit a Mexican worker," José explained. "They shout at you if you don't speak English, they tell you to hurry up all the time. It's unjust."

A white foreman hit a Black worker recently, Tyron noted. Many workers speak of various other abuses. "You work overtime, maybe they pay, maybe they don't," a young Asian worker explained.

A handful of workers said they thought "illegals" should be deported. "What does it mean to be 'illegal?' That's just the bosses term for dividing us up so they can do what they want to us," SWP candidate Fiske, a machine operator and member of the International Association of Machinists, replied. "When the boss has a way to divide us, arrest some of us, take us away, how are we going to be able to fight for our rights?"

In a bilingual statement circulated at the factory, Fiske blasted the employers for "layoffs and downsizing" and called on the unions to "lead a real fight to defend immigrant workers," and "demand jobs for all, a massive public works program to build hospitals, schools, daycare centers, roads, and other services to provide work for everyone who wants it."

José Aravena contributed to this article.

Campaign for the socialist alternative!

- ☐ Sign me up as a Young Socialist for Harris and Garza. I want to campaign for the socialist alternative and against the parties of exploitation, racism, and war.
- ☐ Sign me up as a campaign supporter and keep me informed of protests, picket lines, and other political activities.
- ☐ Enclosed is a \$ _____ contribution
- ☐ I want to invite a candidate to speak at my union, school, or organization
- ☐ Enclosed is \$10 for a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly, or \$6 for 4 months of *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

Mail to: Socialist Workers 1996 Campaign, P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY 10009

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Unionists in Los Angeles are using their experience of the recent Central Organization of Cuban Workers congress in Havana to help sell Pathfinder, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. After discussing Cuba and the CTC congress on the job and showing his pictures around, Mark Friedman, who is in the International Association of Machinists at Northwest Airlines, sold two *Militant* subscriptions, a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription, two issues of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, and a pamphlet on Panama.

"One co-worker came to a forum on the CTC congress, where he got a subscription and two *New Internationalists*. He was a strong supporter of the Grenadian revolution while active in the oil workers union in Trinidad," Friedman added.

In Houston, members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union have sold five Pathfinder titles, one Pathfinder Readers Club membership, a *Militant* subscription, and two copies of the CTC theses, along with seven copies of the *Militant*. Much of the success has come from reportbacks from the CTC congress in Havana by workers at the Shell plant. As many as six meetings are now being organized for workers who went to Cuba in April to share their experiences.

These experiences illustrate how talking socialism with workers, engaging in political activity, and selling revolutionary literature go hand in hand. That's what the cam-

paigned to increase sales of Pathfinder books and the five-week international *Militant* subscription drive are all about, and it's how supporters of the socialist movement can regain momentum in these campaigns, which have fallen behind this month.

As part of the international sales campaign, a team of supporters from Christchurch, New Zealand, visited Dunedin in late May. At the University of Otago and going door-to-door near the campus, the team sold more than \$100 of Pathfinder literature, including two copies of *New Internationalist* no. 10, with the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," three Malcolm X titles, and three titles on U.S. politics and history. Activists sold 15 copies of the *Militant* and two subscriptions along with Pathfinder titles.

Young Socialists in Toronto went door-to-door after their YS meeting recently to work on their chapter's goal of winning three new subscribers to the *Militant*. They also went to a picket line at the Jockey Club in Toronto, where the Service Employee International Union has been locked out.

In Pittsburgh, Pathfinder supporters took the books to a film

May 26: 47%
Should be: 87%

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

	Through Pathfinder Bookstores			To Commercial Distributors			Total			Readers Club
UNITED STATES	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	% sold	Members
Boston*	65	88	135%	50	38	76%	115	126	110%	41
Greensboro	41	47	115%	36	20	56%	77	67	87%	33
Washington, D.C.	54	40	74%	42	33	79%	96	73	76%	35
Los Angeles	120	90	75%	95	62	65%	215	152	71%	70
Cleveland	50	34	68%	40	28	70%	90	62	69%	18
San Francisco	95	61	64%	74	50	68%	169	111	66%	70
Pittsburgh	63	34	54%	49	39	80%	112	73	65%	32
Miami	55	49	89%	42	1	2%	97	50	52%	32
Atlanta	48	35	73%	32	5	16%	80	40	50%	39
Seattle*	80	27	34%	60	42	70%	140	69	49%	61
Salt Lake City	50	38	76%	40	5	13%	90	43	48%	40
Brooklyn	165	96	58%	130	37	28%	295	133	45%	73
Peoria	27	20	74%	21	1	5%	48	21	44%	17
New York	175	60	34%	175	80	46%	350	140	40%	80
Philadelphia	63	33	52%	49	10	20%	112	43	38%	42
Newark	171	71	42%	133	44	33%	304	115	38%	97
Twin Cities	86	50	58%	67	1	1%	153	51	33%	54
Detroit	77	42	55%	60	2	3%	137	44	32%	46
Houston*	45	22	49%	32	0	0%	77	22	29%	35
Chicago*	77	32	42%	60	0	0%	137	32	23%	38
Morgantown	32	6	19%	25	0	0%	57	6	11%	19
Birmingham	65	12	18%	50	0	0%	115	12	10%	54
Des Moines*	45	0	0%	35	0	0%	80	0	0%	29
Total	1749	987	55%	1397	498	36%	3146	1485	47%	1055
Goal/Should be	1800	1566	87%	1400	1,21	87%	3200	2784	87%	
* no new report										
AUSTRALIA	36	18	50%		35		36	53	147%	3
CANADA										
Toronto	90	103	114%	70	88	126%	160	191	119%	52
Vancouver	36	28	78%	28	14	50%	64	42	66%	50
Montreal	72	21	29%	64	0	0%	136	21	15%	36
Total	198	152	69%	162	102	111%	360	254	81%	86
Goal/Should be	220	191	87%	92	80	87%	312	271	87%	
NEW ZEALAND										
Auckland	65	65	100%				65	65	100%	38
Christchurch	28	22	79%				28	22	79%	14
Total	93	87	94%				93	87	94%	52
SWEDEN										
Stockholm	40	40	100%	60	0	0%	100	40	40%	
BRITAIN										
London	95	103	108%	98	106	108%	193	209	108%	8
Sheffield	14	3	21%	20	34	170%	34	37	109%	0
Manchester	46	30	65%	65	30	46%	111	60	54%	0
Total	155	136	65%	183	170	93%	338	306	91%	8

Militant Subscription Drive
MAY 11 — JUNE 16, 1996

City	Militant			PM			NI		
United States	goal	sold	%	goal	sold	%	goal	sold	%
Seattle	50	23	46%	10	5	50%	15	0	0%
Twin Cities, MN	55	19	35%	20	14	70%	15	4	27%
Detroit	50	17	34%	8	3	38%	15	8	53%
Miami	35	11	31%	15	6	40%	15	2	13%
Greensboro, NC	30	9	30%	5	3	60%	5	0	0%
Atlanta	27	8	30%	10	8	80%	8	0	0%
Des Moines	30	7	23%	20	1	5%	15	0	0%
Los Angeles	60	14	23%	30	17	57%	30	19	63%
Brooklyn	75	17	23%	35	5	14%	35	10	29%
Birmingham, AL	35	7	20%	7	2	29%	20	0	0%
Philadelphia	40	8	20%	10	3	30%	12	0	0%
Salt Lake City	42	8	19%	12	6	50%	21	2	10%
San Francisco	65	10	15%	20	6	30%	40	10	25%
Cleveland	20	3	15%	6	1	17%	5	0	0%
Newark, NJ	80	11	14%	30	4	13%	30	0	0%
New York	70	8	11%	40	1	3%	35	0	0%
Chicago	40	4	10%	20	4	20%	12	0	0%
Houston	30	3	10%	20	0	0%	8	0	0%
Pittsburgh	40	4	10%	5	2	40%	10	0	0%
Washington, DC	30	3	10%	10	2	20%	10	0	0%
Peoria, IL	15	1	7%	2	0	0%	5	0	0%
Boston	40	1	3%	10	0	0%	20	0	0%
Morgantown, WV	21	0	0%	1	0	0%	6	0	0%
Cincinnati	1	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total U.S.	980	197	20%	346	93	27%	387	55	14%
Canada									
Montreal	25	11	44%	8	0	0%	35	10	29%
Toronto	45	5	11%	10	4	40%	20	7	35%
Vancouver	20	7	35%	3	4	133%	10	8	80%
Total	90	13	14%	21	8	38%	65	25	38%
Britain									
London	20	7	35%	20	1	5%	3	3	100%
Manchester	26	3	12%	2	0	0%	15	3	20%
Sheffield	2	0	0%	1	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total	46	12	26%	22	2	9%	18	6	33%
New Zealand									
Auckland	30	9	30%	2	0	0%	5	1	20%
Christchurch	12	4	33%	1	0	0%	2	1	50%
Total	42	13	31%	3	0	0%	7	2	29%
France									
	5	0	0%	5	0	0%	10	0	0%
Australia									
	10	3	30%	3	1	33%	5	3	60%
Iceland									
	10	0	0%	0	1	10%	10	0	0%
Sweden									
	10	5	50%	8	3	38%	6	3	50%
International Total	1188	243	20%	403	108	27%	498	94	19%
Goal/Should be at	1100	440	40%	350	140	40%	400	160	40%
IN THE UNIONS									
United States									
UAW	75	19	25%	15	0	0%	35	5	14%
UNITE	25	5	20%	10	2	20%	10	4	40%
OCAW	35	2	6%	0	1	33%	0	1	100%
USWA	45	2	4%	5	2	40%	35	2	6%
IAM	56	2	4%	16	1	6%	26	2	8%
UTU	60	2	3%	5	0	0%	30	2	7%
UMWA	5	0	0%	0	0	0%	5	0	0%
UFCW	5	0	0%	7	0	0%	7	0	0%
U.S. Total	306	32	10%	58	6	10%	148	16	11%
New Zealand									
Meat Workers	4	1	25%						
Engineers Union	7	0	0%						
United Food&Bev.	4	0	0%						
NZ Total	15	1	7%						



Militant/Charlene Adamson

New Pathfinder bookstore recently opened in Peoria, Illinois

showing of the documentary *Struggles In Steel, A Story of African American Steelworkers*. They sold \$30 worth of literature and signed up two people for the Pathfinder's Readers Club, which allows members a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder titles.

Supporters from San Francisco set up a campaign and Pathfinder literature table recently at the University of Santa Cruz. A large sign saying "Defend the Socialist Revolution in Cuba" and a display of Pathfinder books attracted many students to the table. They sold seven copies of the *Militant* and three subscriptions.

Three students asked if they could take an issue of the paper to look through. After 30 minutes, one young woman returned and subscribed to the *Militant* and signed up for more information about the world youth festival in the summer of 1997. Others were interested in the U.S.- Cuba Youth Exchange this July. The supporters also took advantage of the visit

to talk to the buyer for the campus library and dropped off the new 1996 Pathfinder catalogue.

On a recent sales trip in Philadelphia, Pathfinder representatives made 30 visits to bookstores, libraries and professors. They lined up four new accounts, and project initial sales of more than 100 books. Both local and national Pathfinder reps met with professors for classroom adoption sales. "We found that this was a vastly untapped market for us. Each professor we spoke to also gave us a list of other professors to talk to," explained Sara Lobman, a Pathfinder editor who spent a week doing sales in that city.

Holly Harkness described how she sold three subscriptions in one week on the job at American Axle Manufacturing, organized by the United Auto Workers Local 235. One new subscriber had attended the demonstration protesting Washington's support of Israel's bombing of Lebanon in Washington D.C. on April 23. He liked the *Militant's* coverage on Lebanon.

Two other new subscribers are young black women. One was in Saudi Arabia during the Iraq war and had already bought *U.S.*

Pathfinder books sold to Co-workers

Unions	Goal	Sold	% sold	Readers Club
United States				
UFCW	6	3	50%	0
UAW	100	43	43%	49
UNITE	42	12	29%	7
OCAW	50	10	20%	25
UTU	85	5	6%	40
IAM	71	0	0%	19
UMWA	5	0	0%	7
USWA	58	0	0%	13
Total	411	73	18%	160
Goal/Should be	400	348	87%	
Canada				
IAM	13	4	31%	3
Great Britain				
AEEU	10	2	20%	1
TGWU	7	1	14%	0
RMT	0	1	0%	0
UK Total	17	4	24%	1
As of 5/27				

IAM— International Association of Machinists; OCAW— Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW— United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA— United Mine Workers of America; UNITE— Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA— United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union.

Hands Off the Mideast! The other had seen the *Militant* at the Selfridge Air Force base near Detroit and also at Fort Hood in Texas. They read it, liked it, and were glad to meet someone at work who distributed the paper.

This week we welcome supporters in Sweden and two more cities in United Kingdom to the charts on monthly Pathfinder sales and subscription chart of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Supporters of Pathfinder, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are gearing up around the world for the target week that begins June 1. They have been calling in asking for extra subscription cards and extra bundles of both the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Let's use the momentum of the target week to catch up in the Pathfinder sales and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription drive campaigns!

'Cuban workers have taken initiative'

Fidel Castro speaks to congress of Central Organization of Cuban Workers

Below are major excerpts of the speech given by Fidel Castro, president of Cuba and first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, at the closing session of the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) on April 30. The translation appeared in the May 15 issue of the weekly *Granma Internacional*. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

It's not so easy to make a closing speech at a congress such as this, at a moment such as this, in the complex situations in which we are living; but for any person it is a very great honor to be granted such a privilege, because I believe it is one of the best congresses that I've seen.

In the first place, it is a political congress — as was noted on the first day — a revolutionary congress, an ideological congress. Very accurate and profound things were said here when it was expressed that this was not a congress of workers demanding a share of the power, or struggling to obtain power, but rather a congress of workers in power.

We have learned many things during these years of intense revolutionary struggle, but here we have learned new things, because we, or at least I had never gotten that exact impression of the nature of a people in power, with such clarity and such significance, as we have seen in this congress.

And it is not only that the workers are in power, but that the workers have been in power for 37 years, and are the living expression of the work undertaken during those years. And we have seen a number of workers' congresses, and the numbers have been eloquent: so many university graduates among the delegates, so many intermediate level graduates and so many more statistics that could be read, minus one: there is not one sole illiterate person, not one single person who does not know what he or she is doing, and why he or she is doing it. Only in these circumstances could something so moving and so stimulating as this congress be achieved.

The experience accumulated over years has also been brought to bear here. That was demonstrated from the first day, because — as was so well expressed — it's not a four-day congress, it's a year-long congress, and in one year the Cuban trade unions worked in a really admirable way to guarantee the quality of this event from the first day. You certainly haven't been on vacation, because throughout this special period you've had to participate in supremely important activities and processes, in very hard tasks as part of this major battle for the survival of the Revolution and of the nation, first in the workers' parliaments and then in the assemblies for efficiency.

Duty of defending many things

We cannot forget that we were faced with confronting and solving practically insoluble problems. How were we to do that? How, when the country was left on its own, losing everything overnight: markets, raw materials, fertilizers, fuel, credits; and also blockaded, and on top of that, morally battered, because it was a very hard blow for all of us to see those who had been our allies in the struggle collapsing, while the United States was emerging stronger, wealthier and more influential than ever.

In that task we had the sacred duty of defending many sacred things: we had to defend the nation, the country's history, the Revolution, the country's independence, dignity and even its life, because, can any of you conceive of life without the Revolution [*Exclamations of "No!"*] And could the millions and millions of patriots who have fought for so long conceive of life without the Revolution? [*Exclamations of "No!"*] So, the very life of a people was at stake in a unipolar world, on a little island without big rivers, without its own fuel, without large natural resources, and living next door to a power that did not easily resign itself to this country's existence, to this country's valor, to this country's challenge and this country's victories, and a power that has never given up the idea of destroying the Revolution and

its achievements.

New information is appearing all the time especially when some files and documents are published relating to the many operations they have carried out against us. This people has had to take on the taming of not just one, two or three tigers, but of a thousand tigers. Somebody once said that it was a paper tiger, and, in the strategic sense it is, because one day it will cease to be master of the world; but for a little country that has had to fight every day since January 1, 1959, throughout the cold war and faced with this monstrous force, that is equivalent to having to tame I don't know how many beasts on countless occasions....

How it must pain them that at this congress we can speak of an infant mortality rate of under ten, and even under nine, after a minimum of five years of the special period! How painful must be the news that life expectancy has increased; that, in spite of the shortage of resources and medicines, our doctors are constantly making ever greater advances!

How can this Cuban miracle be compared with what we know is occurring in other parts of the world and particularly in Latin America? And they've wanted to destroy our country, they have even wanted to charge us with human rights violations, when the lives of approximately one million children and young people have been saved by the work of the Revolution. That reduction in infant mortality in the first year of life from 60 to less than ten signifies hundreds of thousands of babies' lives saved, to which can be added the hundreds of thousands over one year of age who have been saved, and the persons and lives saved by the Revolution, and the raising of life expectancy by 20 years for our compatriots.

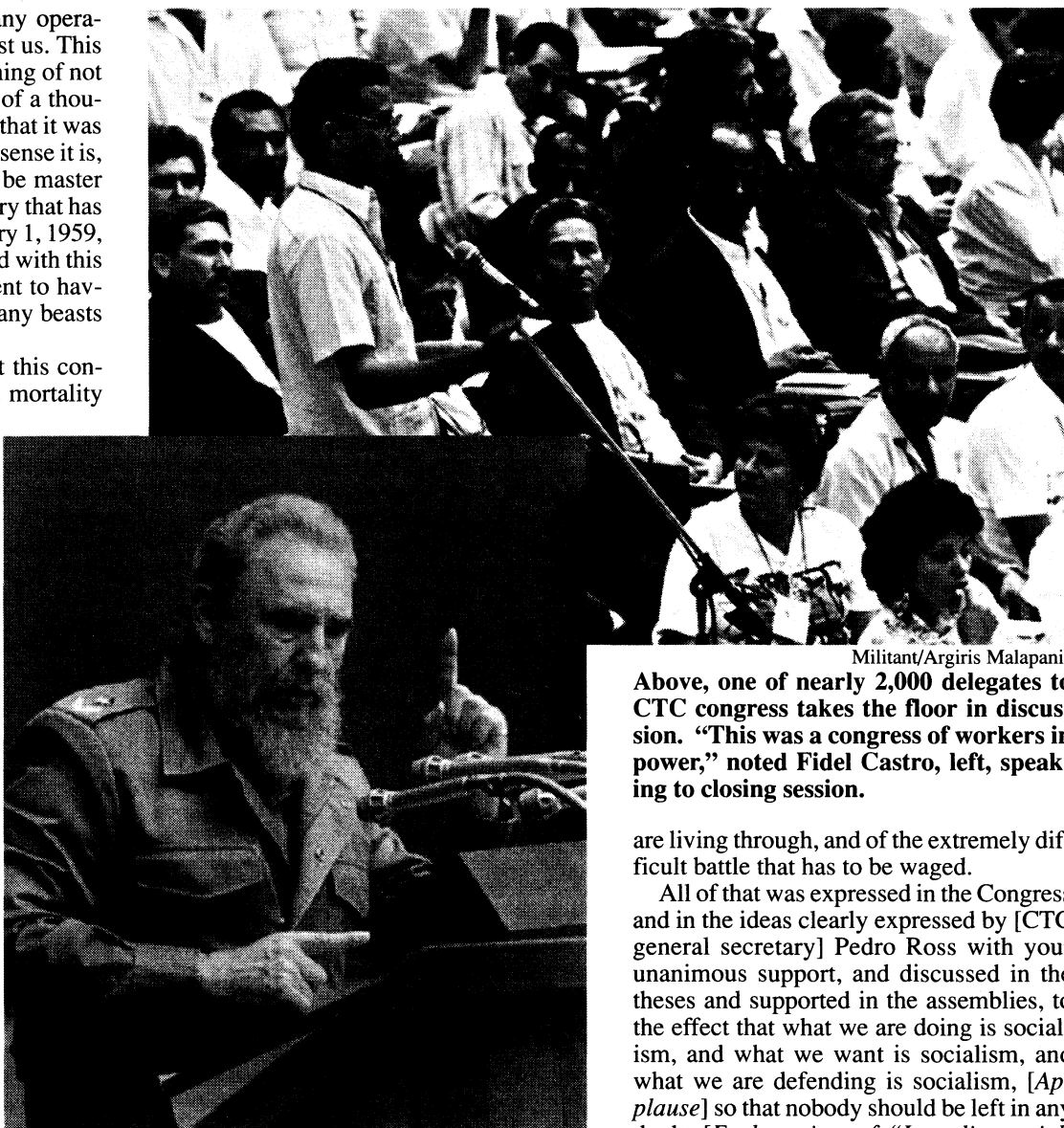
The United States, which supported all the bloody regimes responsible for the disappearance of tens of thousands of people — some people affirm that it was hundreds of thousands, because there are countries where over 100,000 people disappeared after U.S. intervention, as was the case in Guatemala, and what happened in South America — with their arms, with their advisers, champions of torture, and of the application of inconceivable methods that they learned in the war in Vietnam and taught to the repressive forces in Latin America, in order to prevent another Cuban Revolution. It didn't matter to them if 100 infants out of every thousand die each year, and more in some countries with an extremely high average....

Recently you all read that a number of persons in England fell sick with an illness that attacks the brain. This is a fairly well known disease which also affects other species, such as sheep and cattle — it's a kind of molecule, they say, so as not to use another technical name — but it's a disease that rarely appears in humans — in the molecules of the sheep and cattle, there are common factors — and when there were ten or 12 cases in young people, a terrible panic broke out in Europe, and almost in the whole world, and there was talk of slaughtering millions of head of cattle, in places like England, just because of a theory.

During that same period, after the first news of that disease in England, between 8,000 and 10,000 persons died of meningitis in West Africa, without immunization or medical care. What would happen in Europe if 8,000 or 10,000 persons died of a similar illness within a few weeks? However, what occurred in Africa went practically unmentioned. How could the world achieve such a level of selfishness, such a lack of solidarity, that such things can happen?

Thus, diseases such as AIDS and others are on the increase; cholera, tuberculosis, this latter also associated with AIDS, and terrible problems of that type are appearing. That's of no importance to them.

How they must suffer knowing that in



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Above, one of nearly 2,000 delegates to CTC congress takes the floor in discussion. "This was a congress of workers in power," noted Fidel Castro, left, speaking to closing session.

spite of their blockade of so many years, the collapse of the socialist bloc and the special period, as I said yesterday, we have been able to guarantee, in one form or another, one liter of milk per day to all children under seven years of age, and a considerable quantity of yogurt to children between the ages of seven and 13, at prices totally accessible to the population.

How they would suffer if they were to hear yesterday's story by the comrade from Amancio on how he had created a UBPC [Basic Unit of Cooperative Production].

Imperialist hatred of Cuba

There is hatred and at the same time respect, as I was saying. Contempt there cannot be, but there is a hatred for this country that they believed would fall a few days after the collapse of the socialist bloc and the USSR, but they are seeing the years pass by without it collapsing. On the contrary, and without exaggeration it is stronger; and on the contrary, and without exaggeration, it's beginning to advance and is advancing. It must really be unbearable.

They invent legislation and measures: the Torricelli Act, to destroy us from within, or to destroy us through hunger, through total economic strangulation. There are even lunatics who are thinking along the lines of destroying us, in an case, by force, without the least sense of responsibility for the implacable and unstoppable hornet's nest they would stir up in Cuba, and I am sure, on the whole continent if the craziness of a military action against our country was one day implemented. They come up with new legislation, a more rigorous blockade, new measures, a lot of pressure exerted on the world, anything rather than renouncing their obsessive idea of eliminating the Revolution.

Of course, all this makes us think, helps us to explain the causes. And now, when they are more haughty and arrogant than ever, more irresponsible than ever, they cannot resign themselves to what one day they will have to resign themselves to.

This sentiment of our workers and of our people has been expressed here energetically, patriotically, militantly, with a willingness to work hard and a very profound comprehension of the historical period we

are living through, and of the extremely difficult battle that has to be waged.

All of that was expressed in the Congress and in the ideas clearly expressed by [CTC general secretary] Pedro Ross with your unanimous support, and discussed in the theses and supported in the assemblies, to the effect that what we are doing is socialism, and what we want is socialism, and what we are defending is socialism, [*Applause*] so that nobody should be left in any doubt. [*Exclamations of, "Long live socialist Cuba!"*] That socialist Cuba, that power of the people, those achievements of the Revolution are what we are defending. I agree with what a woman comrade said this afternoon, that the first achievement was precisely the Revolution itself; the power of the people. This sentiment was expressed today as never before.

We have recovered so much morally, politically, in terms of awareness, from that crushing blow we received five or six years ago; it has been demonstrated, in passing — and making another Olympic allusion — that our country as a boxer has a tough, tough jaw, it's impossible to knock it out. [*Applause*] It resisted, it withheld the ideological blow and was able to resist heroically the tremendous material blow it received. And this can be clearly perceived and is palpable in the tone, in the spirit and in the dignity of the discussions here, which leads to the primary conclusion that the Revolution at this moment is stronger than ever. [*Applause*]

A new spirit has emerged

This congress has also been a highly important economic and social congress. During this year-long process, and up until today, every possible subject has been discussed, including problems with major implications, and very significant programs. The progress of the renewed effort in the sugar harvest, the planting, the weeding, the harvesting have all been discussed across the length and breadth of the island. Many ideas have been brought out, a great deal of knowledge has been acquired, and a new spirit has emerged....

That battle isn't won in a day! We had to deal with I don't know how many machines without parts; harvesters which had gone for many years without any repairs; no steel for the repairs; no steel for the sugar mills; no resources to buy engines and replace engines. The harvest was carried out with the possibilities we obtained as we went along, because we have resisted, given that the Revolution didn't collapse a few days after the disappearance of the socialist bloc and businesspeople and the world came to gain confidence in Cuba, and in Cuba's capacity to fight and to resist.

So, resources began to appear which we

couldn't have even thought about in the early years: financing for tobacco cultivation, or cane, for rice and then for new products, significant credits of a notable volume, although, in real terms, we have to pay dearly for them, we have to pay them back at higher interest rates. No other country has to pay the interest rates that we are paying for those credits. That's the blockade, those are the pressures, that's the price that we have to pay for every one of these measures we've adopted to obtain resources, but we're doing it, and in this way we've started to raise production with minimal resources.

But you see what can be done today with a ton of fuel, with a ton of steel; we do three times as much as before with the machines we have available. We won those spaces and those possibilities with our fortitude, with our resistance, and that exasperates them.

In other countries they have spent billions to eradicate socialism; they've lent it, donated it and given it away and in exchange, production has fallen lower and lower. There was a time when our production lacked everything: fuel, raw materials for the textile industry and the machine industry, for numerous lines of manufacture, for the production of milk, meat, eggs; and the animal feed imported by our country.

Factories were completely paralyzed for lack of electricity, and entire thermoelectrical plants; there were neither materials to repair them nor sufficient fuel for minimum needs. So many factories had to close down.

And transportation. We had to see how the almost 30,000 daily journeys within City of Havana were reduced to 6,000 or 7,000. The country has had to acquire or manufacture two million bicycles to confront the transportation problems of workers, students, persons who needed mobility, two million bicycles! We set about improvising bicycle factories — to produce some of them, as you heard yesterday — searching for all kinds of solutions.

The loss of raw materials for footwear, clothing, everything. Such a material blow really could not be conceived.

You've seen how factories that were paralyzed have been made operational again, how raw materials have been appearing; how the machine industry is recovering; how the nickel industry is recovering; how sugar production is recovering; and how food production is recovering....

All those things are visible; however, one thing has a stronger claim on my attention: the reaction of the people, how we are beginning to observe this heartening and healthy state that has been developing since the most critical moments, since the time we were in intensive care; what the people have learned and how the idea of economic efficiency, one of the most important, and most decisive results of this congress, has taken hold.

Controls, savings, efficiency, loss reduction, increased earnings, profitability, the fight for enterprise profitability, the tremendous battle to save a factory, to keep it from closing because of its economic and social importance, all this can now be observed. The spirit of studying every aspect, that process which has been referred to as the reordering of the work force and that famous phrase you use: the redirecting of enterprises....

We have confronted the problems. It is the reverse of what happens everywhere else and of what is advised everywhere else by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United States: all those neoliberal theories that you're familiar with, all those practices, throwing out tens of millions of workers onto the streets, closing schools, closing hospitals, eliminating essential public services, without consulting with anybody, without talking with anybody.

Consulting the workers at every step

We could say that in this whole process of the special period, not a single step was taken without consulting the people, especially the workers. It has been a long process; it has been a long process to confront, from the previous stage to this moment, and we have had to adapt ourselves to unpleasant realities which make us suffer like a sick person in an intensive care unit, or in a state

of severe crisis.

We also had to resign ourselves to many things that our minds didn't accept, our minds educated in a great spirit of equity, of equality, of equal possibilities for all, which we were able to enjoy for a number of years, in that stage in which the world was living.

Ramón [Castro] and others spoke of a mental blockade, but the thing is, in our minds we had a number of things, a number of good things. This people's spirit of solidarity has no parallel, its generosity, its willingness to help and give, its love of justice; that communist spirit of our people, because we had a communist spirit without an economy which could permit communism, and for that reason we always explained that socialism was one thing and communism was another....

The Revolution achieved all the things we have talked about, things which no other Third World country has attained and that, of course, many peoples have not attained. In social achievements, almost no other people in the world attained them.

At this moment I can't forget Vietnam, I can't forget China, countries which made enormous efforts, like we did, under difficult conditions. But what capitalist country achieved the level of social security, of social justice that our country has attained, of respect for the people attained in our country, of social security?

Some very rich people — and they became rich at the expense of underdevelopment, as a rule, of the rest of the world — had so much money and were so afraid of communism and socialism that they tried to implement a better distribution of the resources they had. That was before, wasn't it? Now the cold war's over, now the socialist bloc has collapsed, and now indeed measures are taken without concern for any class, and the capitalists and imperialists overdo their neoliberal measures so much that today even the International Monetary Fund speaks of social development, because it sees that the world is turning into a volcano and the situation is unbearable.

We observe those sentiments when our visitors tell us of what's going on; it's clear that the exploiters are starting to get afraid again. They're afraid of social upheaval, a raid of social explosions, afraid of chaos. They had lost these fears when they believed that they could commit injustices in this world with more freedom than ever, and now they're afraid again, so much so that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other institutions speak about the need to dedicate some resources to social development.

Worldwide attacks on social benefits

Neoliberalism, the globalization of the economy, hegemonic policies, selfishness and the monopoly of all the resources are incompatible with any social development measure. And to tell the truth, no one knows what's happening with the money that these institutions, as a whole, intend to devote to social development. Furthermore, in the world a huge wave of corruption has been unleashed, and not just in Latin American countries or African countries — as they used to say — but also in Europe and the developed countries. There are also waves of violence, of drug consumption, social measures to achieve balanced budgets, and they also are reducing workers' pensions, public health spending for retired people, for the elderly. We see this problem quite a bit in Europe; they are merciless in their desire to balance their budgets, at the expense of social rights.

In the United States, there is a barbarous



Worker cutting sugar cane at UBPC outside Havana. Through mobilization, Cuban workers turned around five-year decline in sugar production this year.

wave of measures to cut the U.S. population's social benefits, to the detriment of retired workers, the elderly, the sick, everyone. They're doing away with anything that hints of progressive politics in all these countries, in order to impose savage, merciless capitalism, with a fanatic faith that the laws of the market will solve everything. For that reason, they aren't in the state of euphoria and exhilaration that they were five years ago. Now they are full of worry because they don't really know what's going to happen.

Now, what a difference from what has happened in Cuba during the special period, what a different set of procedures for adopting measures. We had to take steps, many difficult measures. In all the countries, as someone who spoke on behalf of the foreign delegates said yesterday, a few people get together, they decide on measures and they apply them to the people mercilessly, with policemen on horseback, with tear gas, with police cars. We see that on television every day, whenever they put on some news from abroad. That's what happens and that's how they impose their measures. How different from the manner in which the Revolution took measures to solve terrible economic situations! First of all, no one was thrown into the street, as they say here, and the workers in the factories that were shut down continued to get paid, maybe not 100 percent but a large part of their previous income, at least a sufficient amount for the few things that could be bought. No one was abandoned....

A revolution, and certainly not this one, could not adopt measures of that kind, and none of us was willing to adopt measures of that kind. At the time there were advisers here of all kinds, we stood our ground, we did things as we thought they should be done. They were discussed in the National Assembly, they were discussed in the streets, they were discussed again in the National Assembly, they were discussed again in the streets, all the measures and economic openings, the joint ventures, the possibilities for foreign investment and the whole set of activities we have been carrying out to face the situation in a form we considered correct, with measures of all kinds.

Democratic and revolutionary methods

The financial situation had reached a critical point, that couldn't continue: 12 billion pesos in the street; and at a moment when we needed more than ever to work, many people were leaving their jobs, because one person's wages were enough to satisfy a family's needs; so, at the very moment when workers were needed, people were leaving their workplaces left, right and center; and on top of all this there was the transporta-

tion crisis, it was terrible. And we began to win the battle using these revolutionary and democratic methods, and the amount of money in circulation began to be reduced.

But remember all the measures we discussed and how many we had to take, and how many millions of people expressed their views, and how, finally, measures were taken which had been discussed and which had gained widespread consensus. Some of them were extremely hard, not those related to food, but to cigarettes, alcoholic beverages; gratuities were stopped. There are things that hurt and that have an influence....

Other measures were adopted, such as the farmers' markets, to give impetus to food production, to open up the possibility of being able to buy some things which were impossible to obtain, given the situation we were in, although, clearly, they weren't the methods we used before, when we could distribute pork, chicken, eggs, milk, etc., at minimum prices, which was a better way. Nor did we have the resources to establish parallel markets to bring in capital for the state. Nevertheless, we had to find a way of making that money circulate a little, to collect a little money and, moreover, many people were absolutely convinced that the farmers' markets were a solution, and since people with a lot of money in their pockets, who didn't have anything to spend it on, were saying, "It's better to have somebody supplying something, never mind the price...." There are criticisms of the markets because of the prices but, as I understand it, many people who complain about the market also defend it.

For me, it isn't an ideal formula, far from it, but it was a way, a measure that had to be taken, with its advantages and disadvantages. The intermediary inevitably emerged, and remains there because this is a personality associated with the free market....

Of course, one thing was inevitable: people began to spend money, and in the first year almost two billion pesos were brought in, I think it was 1.953 billion; in the second year it was about 700 million, already reduced by almost two-thirds because, naturally, money was being spent.

A relatively significant portion was recovered by the state, it was anti-inflationary; another far smaller portion was recovered by the state in taxes and other measures imposed on the farmers' markets and on self-employed workers. An even smaller portion by the UBPCs, as they are new organizations; and another by state companies; it was appropriate that they should recover money.

However, one of the sacred things that we had to defend was the ration system still available to the population, to guarantee that minimum amount of garden and root vegetables, of other food products where possible, and a significant proportion are imported foodstuffs. This meant guaranteeing rice, guaranteeing specific quantities of beans with what was imported; over 80 percent of the production of the UBPCs, of the cooperatives and of the remaining state enterprises all reached the population at local distribution points, and this year we've seen the miracle of non-rationed products, even if these are only cabbage and potatoes.

The organic farms began to produce re-

Continued on Page 10

Read the Theses for the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC)

Main document that served as basis for discussion and election of delegates in 81,000 factory and other workplace assemblies involving more than 3 million workers. It consists of 11 sections that include, "The world, the workers, and the situation in Cuba," "Unions are by and for the workers," and "Defending the revolution means guaranteeing our power." The CTC Congress took place April 27-30.

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'We will defend workers' political power at

Union congress in Cuba assesses key role of working class in reversing collapse

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA, Cuba — "We will defend at any cost our national independence, socialist ideals, and the political power of the revolution, which is the power of the workers," said Pedro Ross, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC). He was reading the political declaration adopted by the delegates at the final session of the trade union federation's 17th congress on April 30.

The four-day gathering concluded a year-long process that began when the CTC issued the call for the congress on May Day 1995. Through successive rounds of CTC conferences in all of Cuba's municipalities and assemblies at worksites involving more than 3 million workers, Cuba's labor movement took stock of what the working class has accomplished in increasing its management role and making the decisive difference in the effort to reverse the collapse of industrial and agricultural production.

The congress adopted a series of resolutions building on the political document that served as the basis for debate and election of delegates — known as the Theses for the 17th Congress. The decisions of the convention serve as a launching pad for further collective efforts by workers themselves to push Cuba's economic recovery forward and resist the escalating economic war by Washington.

Some 3,700 people attended the gathering. They included the 1,900 delegates elected by workplace assemblies, 400 guests from Cuba, and nearly 1,400 observers from 197 unions and other labor organizations in 50 countries.

Francisco Durán, a member of the CTC's National Secretariat, informed participants that among the voting delegates, 54 percent were currently working in production or service jobs and the rest were on full-time for their unions. The average age of delegates was 41, with about one third being 35 years old and younger. Nearly 600, or 31 percent, were women. (Women represent 42 percent of the country's labor force of 4.6 million.)

Durán also noted that 311 of the delegates had participated in internationalist missions around the world — from volunteering to fight the invading racist armies of South Africa in Angola in the 1970s and 80s, to serving as teachers, doctors, or engineers in numerous semicolonial countries.

Most of the congress proceedings were broadcast on radio and television so millions of Cubans could see or hear what went on.

On the opening day, April 27, delegates were divided into six working commissions that took up the issues of employment and reorganization of the workforce, increasing efficiency in production and labor productivity, raising agricultural production, the structure of workers' wages, organization of the unions, defense of the revolution, and international solidarity.

The commissions considered many of the thousands of proposals raised at pre-congress assemblies and prepared 16 resolutions that were discussed, amended, and adopted by the delegates.

During the last three days of the gathering, delegates worked in plenary sessions chaired by Ross, who also gave the opening report. In addition to the national secretariat

of the CTC, Cuban president Fidel Castro, most government ministers, and the entire Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba took part in the proceedings with voice.

Success of sugar harvest

"There is nothing more politically important than the successful culmination of the sugar harvest," said Ross in his opening report to the first plenary session April 28. "Within a few weeks, we will be able to tell our people, the whole country and the world that we exceeded the production plan set for the harvest.... The workers in our main industry achieved this triumph step by step, together with the cane cutters, who mobi-



Arnaldo Ramírez (speaking) describes how workers in Las Tunas built from scratch a dairy UBPC in a remote area that now provides milk for the entire region.

lized in response to the call made by the leadership of the revolution."

Sugarcane production collapsed to record lows in the years 1993-95 as shortages of fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and spare parts for cane-cutting machinery mounted. Heavy rains and flooding also took a toll. The acute shortages were triggered by the post-1989 abrupt end in aid and favorable trade relations with the former Soviet bloc countries, opening what the Cubans refer to as the "special period." The 1994 harvest fell to 4 million tons from 4.2 million the year before, less than half the 8.4 million produced in 1990. Last year, another disastrous crop yielded a 50-year low of 3.3 million tons.

By the end of the congress sugar production had reached 4.15 million tons and projections indicated that the national goal of 4.5 million tons would be surpassed before the end of May.

The reversal of the decline in sugar production had a big impact in boosting the self-confidence and morale of union members.

"I've never experienced such contagious spirit to meet production goals," said Bárbara Arencido, a delegate from the sugar workers union in Villa Clara, at the opening of the discussion. Some 205 sugar workers were among the delegates.

Arencido reported that 15,000 sugar workers from Sancti Spiritus, taking 51 combines and 60 trucks, went to Villa Clara, the number one province in sugar cane produc-

tion, to help with the harvest there after meeting targets in their areas. Sancti Spiritus and Santiago de Cuba were the first provinces to meet their goals before the CTC congress opened. "We adopted the slogan, 'We can accomplish much together,' [*Se puede mucho juntos*]" said Arencido. That became the official theme of the congress. After Villa Clara met its quota on May Day, union members from that province took off for Holguín to help out.

Throughout the sessions, delegations made announcements with chants and songs, reporting on the progress of the harvest in each province.

The CTC had also organized hundreds of thousands of workers to volunteer to cut

son but instead organize the unions in every province to help put together a serious balance sheet of this year's results before proposing any local quotas.

The 30 percent increase in this year's harvest over 1995, however, has already made projections for a 5 percent increase of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 1996 more solid. Last year, GDP grew by 2.7 percent. These results improve Cuba's capacity to import needed goods, since sugar remains the country's main export crop and a primary source of hard currency.

But above all, as Aruca Carbonel, secretary of the sugar workers union in Santiago, put it, "Our unions were in the thick of this decisive battle. Now thousands of workers know better how to lead."

A taste of capitalism workers reject

"Among all the sections of the Theses, the one most debated and which received the most support is the section titled 'Our strategy does not lead to capitalism,'" said Ross in his opening report. This point permeated the discussion during the second plenary session.

Since 1993, the government has decriminalized possession and use of U.S. dollars; introduced or raised prices on electricity, water, sewage, and other services; opened up markets for sale of agricultural and some industrial goods at unregulated prices; legalized self-employment in dozens of occupations; and signed a multitude of joint ventures to attract capital investment in tourism, mining, oil, and other areas. These measures, aimed at combating inflation and increasing production, have led to growing social inequalities, Ross noted.

"Workers can understand the fact that there are greater social inequalities than we have been accustomed to, if they are necessary to revitalize the economy," Ross stated. "What we will not tolerate and will decisively combat is the development of cronyism, nepotism, privilege, corruption, and theft."

"In tourism we see manifestations of capitalism most workers reject," said Lázaro Bacallao, a delegate from the construction workers union in Varadero, a beach resort in Matanzas province. He pointed to some cases of theft from tourist hotels where management, and in some cases union members, have looked the other way.

The tourism workers union "must struggle against" the siphoning "off of funds, corruption, by those who turn management positions into places for stealing," responded Pedro Ross. He said workers who report such incidents "have the full support of the revolution, the top leadership of the revolution."

Delegates resolved that the unions will act to minimize theft of state resources through organization of voluntary guards and discussions at workers assemblies, as has been done successfully in many factories.

Bacallao and other delegates pointed to the voluntary contributions the majority of tourism workers make to the state for the import of medicines that are in short supply. These donations come from tips these workers receive in hard currency. Individuals who receive hard currency can purchase scarce essential items in dollar stores like soap and oil that many Cubans are unable to obtain. "We are workers who have decided to live in a socialist society under the direction of the Communist Party," Bacallao said. "Solidarity is our answer to the individualism and corruption rampant in capitalist countries."

During the April 29 session, Sara Tamayo, a delegate who works at Palmare's Restaurants in Guardalavaca, and Pedro Chacón, who runs a tourist show taming crocodiles in Ciénaga de Zapata, contributed \$16,000 and \$20,000 respectively that they had received in tips in the last few years. Since 1993 workers in tourism have donated \$1.9 million from tips for the purchase of medicines.

During the special period phenomena like prostitution and begging by children, which the revolution had virtually eliminated, have reappeared, Bacallao said, mostly around tourist installations where hotel employees are often bribed to permit access to the fa-



Members of the new National Committee of the CTC, elected at the union federation's 17th Congress. Pedro Ross (eighth from right) was re-elected general secretary.

any cost' of production

cilities by pimps and prostitutes. He said the unions must take steps to combat organized prostitution around the hotels and that laws should be enacted severely punishing pimping as a crime while avoiding repressive measures against prostitutes themselves. Other delegates who spoke or were interviewed supported these proposals. "That is a struggle we must wage, because it is becoming a business that is actually counter-revolutionary," Bacallao said.

Vilma Espín, president of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), took the floor at the end of that session. "When in the early years of the revolution the people learned that scourges such as gambling and prostitution had been eliminated in Cuba," she said, "the revolution's prestige increased enormously." Espín said the country's penal code will be amended to include pimping and organizing children to beg as a crime. Fidel Castro added that "those who can play a decisive role in this, aside from the administrative bodies that take measures, are the tourism workers themselves."

Lowering unregulated market prices

Taking action to bring down prices on the agricultural markets became another hot topic of discussion. These markets have made food more readily available in cities and towns, easing the most acute conditions Cubans faced at the bottom of the special period in 1993-94. At the same time, food production has not increased as rapidly as most people hoped and the prices remain so high that most Cubans can not afford to buy enough to meet their needs at these markets.

Sarbelio Morales, a member of the First Eastern Front Contingent in Ciego de Avila, gave a passionate presentation on the subject. He explained how his agricultural contingent of 400, which now produces for the Santiago markets, made leaps in production of potatoes, cabbage, and cucumbers by utilization of better seeds and rotating the crops.

The farm sells 92 percent of its produce to the state warehouse and distribution agency (called *acopio*) — used to supply food at subsidized prices on the ration card — and the rest on the agriculture market. "We take cabbages and sell them at 3.5 cents [per pound], sweet potatoes at 6.5 cents, potatoes at 10 cents," Morales said. "But then I see how these farmers markets sell tubers at such high prices putting everyone in such dire straits.... No cabbage can cost five pesos in Cuba. Not a single one."

"Comrades, we producers must try to lower prices in the agricultural markets through our production," he declared.

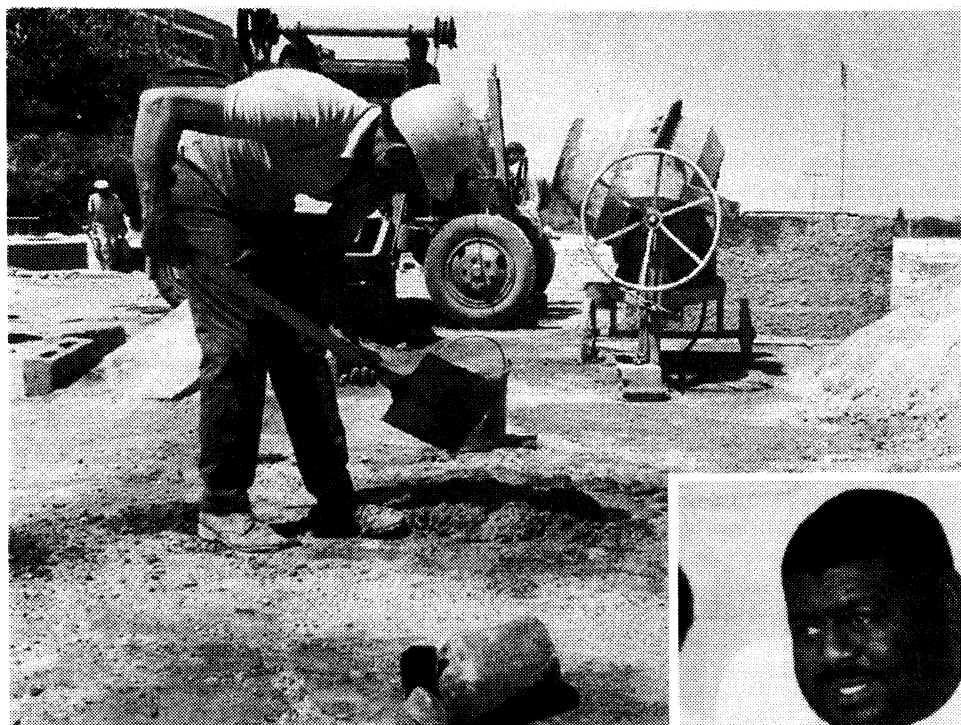
Even after selling most vegetables to the state and charging low prices on the unregulated market the farm is profitable, Morales said. "So why should we strive to make such an exaggerated profit at the expense of the poor? What about the millions of retired?"

In the last two years, the Youth Army of Labor (EJT), has been bringing produce into the cities and selling it directly off trucks at cheaper prices than those offered on the agricultural markets, thus helping to keep the prices down. The EJT consists of special units of youth in the Revolutionary Armed Forces that work on state farms alongside agricultural workers. Morales and other delegates said spreading the EJT example to state farms and the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC) will help drive prices down.

UBPCs are new farm cooperatives that have replaced most state farms since 1993 in an effort to revive food production. Members of the UBPCs — mostly workers formerly employed on state farms — own and sell what they produce but the land itself remains nationalized.

"It is the producers, not the government with its laws, who establish the conditions. The ministry has already adopted measures and told us to take a higher percentage to the market at cheap prices. But the initiative must come out of the producers themselves, who must understand they will solve the problem of the people," Morales said, bringing the audience to its feet for a standing ovation.

"In this colossal battle we are engaged in," responded Fidel Castro, "it is the socialists,



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Hotel construction in Varadero (above). "In tourism, we see manifestations of capitalism most workers reject," said Lázaro Bacallao (right), shown at meeting between U.S. and Cuban trade unionists at Rincón Francés, Varadero.

working men and women like you, who should tell us what socialism promises and can do and what capitalism can promise and offer."

Castro said that because of the efforts by workers and peasants the revolution has been able to guarantee during this difficult period a liter of milk per day to all children under 7 years of age. "What other country in Latin America has been able to achieve this?" he asked.

"What you said today and the example you gave us has taught us what capitalism is," Castro told Morales.

Increasing food production

Several delegates pointed to leadership initiatives by workers in the countryside to increase food production.

A revealing exchange took place on this point under discussion on reversing the collapse of beef and milk production. Nearly half the cattle in the country have died since 1989 because of lack of animal feed, which used to be imported almost entirely from the USSR, or have been slaughtered for beef that is very scarce. Fresh milk production dropped from 829 million liters in 1989 to 320 million in 1995. Because of lack of pesticides and other resources some 2.8 million acres of pasture land have been overrun by *marabú* and other weeds.

Jesús González Sánchez, a delegate from Manicaragua said workers lacked machetes to cut *marabú* in his area. Domingo Gutiérrez from a cattle-raising UBPC in Sancti Spiritus also attributed declining production to the lack of material resources, especially animal fodder.

But Arnaldo Ramírez from the UBPC *Mal Tiempo* [Bad Weather] in Las Tunas told a story that pointed to a different approach. He explained how he took the initiative to establish a dairy UBPC at Amancio, a remote part of the province that lacked roads and other infrastructure, where it was difficult even for the government to provide milk for several hundred children in the area.

Ramírez said he and two mechanics began in 1994 by going to the surrounding towns and recruiting several youth who were unemployed. They made their first machetes from blades of abandoned sugar cane combines, which they used to clear hundreds of acres of land. "When a new group asked to join I told them to bring their own machetes before they came," he said. *Marabú*, a thick weed, is now used for firewood.

Workers got files and other tools from donations of peasants in the area. Lacking wire, they built fences out of mesh made of sticks and plants in order to guard cattle that had been abandoned and roamed wild. They found an older worker who taught them how to milk cows. And a state enterprise donated a tractor. Within a year they were producing 127,000 liters of milk annually from 120 cows. "We didn't have a truck to transport the milk so we asked and got some mules," he said.

The provincial government also provided them with 13 bicycles and with some construction materials. By the end of 1995 workers there had built 20 low-cost housing units for UBPC members.

The news of the success at *Mal Tiempo* began to spread. Ramírez said the UBPC now has 56 members who average 28 years

of age, have cleared 1,200 acres of pasture land, and made a small profit last year. "Over there we are all workers. We are convincing more people. Even the union secretary and the head of the Communist Party in the region moved and now live and work on the UBPC," he said, drawing a standing ovation. "And we are now providing milk for 700 children in Amancio."

A genuine recovery in cattle raising and dairy production around the country is still several years away, several delegates pointed out. But, as Julio Rodríguez from Guantánamo put it, "Mal Tiempo tells us we can speed the day."

At the same time, production of root and garden vegetables, citrus, tobacco, timber, and honey have increased around the country. Many delegates attributed this to the reorganization of state farms into cooperatives where workers exercise more democratic control over the organization of labor and the use of land and other resources, have reduced administrative personnel to a minimum, and provide workers incentives linked to productivity.

On some UBPCs, those who do the hardest physical labor, like ox drivers, earn the most. And the monthly income of most production workers is higher than that of administrators.

Reallocation of workforce

Salvador Valdés Mesa, Minister of Labor and Social Security, told delegates that for the first time in some years there was a significant net growth in the agricultural workforce. Since mid-1995, some 50,000 have joined cooperatives and state farms. Among those are 32,000 new members of the UBPCs, the majority in sugar cane cooperatives.

Valdés said these figures show some modest progress in the joint effort by the government and the unions to reallocate the workforce toward productive activities where workers are mostly needed, like agriculture.

Since the beginning of the special period, some 120,000 workers have had to be reallocated from industries where the drop in production necessitated a cut in the workforce, Valdés said. But no one has been left on the street. Most of these workers have gotten new jobs and only 11,000 still receive unemployment benefits until they find new occupations.

During the commission on organization of the unions, Armando Plaza, a delegate from Holguín, proposed that the CTC begin the process of unionizing self-employed workers. This was included in the resolution from that commission and approved by the delegates.

At the beginning of this year, 204,000 people were registered as self-employed in Cuba in more than 150 occupations. The real figure is much higher, since there are tens of thousands who provide repair services for appliances, sell food on the street, or give taxi rides with their cars without license to

avoid paying taxes. Today self-employed workers, especially those with skills, often earn many times the salary of most factory workers.

Delegates supported strict enforcement of heavily progressive taxation on the income of self-employed or others with high incomes. "The psychology of self-employed workers tends toward individualism and is not a source of socialist consciousness," said Plaza. "But our work with them should stress their status as workers." Other delegates said unionizing the self-employed can strengthen the unity of the labor movement.

Value of manual labor

During discussion on the reorganization of the labor force, Fidel Castro pointed to some of the challenges the revolution faces.

He said there is reason to feel pride because of the high numbers of professionals and technical personnel in the country, but at the same time those figures should be reason for concern. "Manual labor has to be valued highly," he said. "Otherwise who will plant potatoes, who will clean the streets?"

"Everyone wants to be a professional in this country," Castro stated, "a vice created by the revolution itself, by universities." Academics often give inflated figures on how many engineers or other professionals are needed that have nothing to do with reality, he noted.

In the capitalist countries immigrants who are paid starvation wages do the most difficult jobs in construction or agriculture, Castro said. In Cuba the revolution has tried to solve this problem during the special period by giving incentives to workers in the least desired and most physically demanding jobs. "That's why," he said, "I am not sad at all that agricultural workers who used to get paid 80 pesos per month now can earn up to 11,000 pesos a year with a lot of hard

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The National Network on Cuba is organizing a delegation of young workers and students from around the United States for a two-week trip to Cuba this summer. The group will spend most of its time in the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, with a few days in Havana at the end of the trip. In addition to time spent working with Cubans, participants will visit factories, farms, historic sites, and other places of interest.

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Castro speaks to CTC

Continued from Page 7

sults everywhere, they took off in almost all parts of the country; fresh vegetables began to appear at good prices, as a consequence of all those measures; but most of what was sold in the farmers' markets came from the private farmers, and was brought there by intermediaries who, up until now didn't pay taxes, and they are going to have to pay taxes.

Theft, not taxes, raises prices

Those sectors that do not want to pay taxes have created myths and confusion in relation to taxes, to the effect that they make things more expensive. What makes things more expensive is theft, not taxes. And that cabbage which was being sold at just 15 centavos, or that plantain selling at five centavos, as we heard here yesterday, did some tax make them more expensive? It's production that was able to reduce the prices....

A taxation system is very logical and is supremely fair. Don't ever let those sectors deceive a worker by putting the blame on taxes when theft is the cause, because they don't want to pay taxes. And we'll be in a fine fix if we allow a rich sector to emerge, that could wind up having millions if we're not careful, leaving us with the responsibility of paying for daycare centers, schools, hospitals, polyclinics, family doctors and all the social services provided by the Revolution, and which it would never renounce. [Applause] We'd much rather prevent the emergence of millionaires.

You can be sure that none of us shed a tear because there are no millionaires, although we know many honorable *campesinos* who have worked with the Revolution for many years, who obey the country's laws, who are efficient and who do not speculate or steal, and who have made a lot of money.

The fair prices that the state always paid, especially in the case of those who owned enough land, made that possible. It doesn't bother us that those families have high incomes. A person can work honorably and also fulfill with pleasure his or her most elemental duties to society. But there are some who charge whatever they please for any product or service. They exist, and they're getting rich. And now their money also has a value, because whoever had 150 pesos before could get one dollar and now they can get one dollar for 22 or 23 pesos.

Our rich are getting richer with the unavoidable measures we have had to take, we have to understand that, to know that; but they are also getting richer because the peso is acquiring value, and that's not a bad thing. What is worrying is that the rich who have easy access to pesos are getting richer, that's the truth.

However, we must point out that the wages earned by a worker with his own sweat are also taking on value, although he or she receives far less than the rich. We have nothing against rich people, what we want is for them to not steal from the people and that they pay taxes.

Some people say: "Why don't they set a price for their products and services?" Who can set a price for them if the individuals go to solve a problem here and there and deal privately with somebody who asks how much it costs, and then they come to an agreement? Who's going to be regulating

the repair of a boxspring mattress or an old jalopy? But we can say: You have to pay taxes. Taxation is the way to recoup the abusive excess money that some people are taking in, and under a sworn declaration.

And, of course, it hurts all of you and it hurts us that the wages we are able to pay many workers in this country are inferior to what some people here earn in one day. There are people here who earn up to 500 pesos in one day, and more; such as the owner of a vehicle who for moving some family, leaves them completely broke, almost in the position of having to leave the furniture in the car in order to be able to pay the charges, and you know there are people like that.

Thus, I was telling you that we've introduced measures that are tough, that are not adapted to our mentality, nor to our concepts, nor to our things; but they are inevitable, they had to be established.

So, the buses stopped in Las Tunas, and the horse-drawn carriages appeared; they solved the problem, but the drivers were charging one peso for a ten-minute journey, and taking in 3000 to 4000 pesos per month. The People's Power delegates over there wanted to charge higher taxes, in line with what had been established.

The taxation system I'm referring to is not easy. It needs to be very well organized, very well controlled, very well studied, and those measures had to be implemented before the complete organizational structure for collecting taxes was set up. But it has been organized and it has been prepared to collect the taxes, and we have to collect them, because if all the money is accumulated in the hands of a few people in a short time, how are we going to improve somebody's wages, given the great needs that we have at this time? We haven't had as much success with everything as we have had with the cabbages and plantains, although one day we will have that success with many things.

But one thing is for sure already: as production levels have increased, in the UBPCs, in the cooperatives, among the *campesinos*, and even in the victory gardens, the crops grown for a workplace's own consumption, the organic farms, prices in the farmers' markets have seen a parallel drop, as you all know. And they have fallen not only because of increased production, but also because there is less money in circulation, and somebody who bought a mango for 20 pesos on the first day won't buy it now for more than one peso....

Nevertheless, it's very important that you understand that the money in circulation has not been reduced sufficiently. I already said that in the first year we brought in almost two billion pesos, the second year it was about half that amount; in short, of the almost 12 billion originally in circulation, about 2.8 billion pesos has been recovered....

One of the issues that we have to introduce into our compatriots' consciousness is taxation, something we're not accustomed to in this country, and far less after 37 years of the Revolution. I'm not talking about across-the-board taxation, that's not what's important; it was fully discussed by the CTC in the context of social security, and you have seen how that budget's growing, so that some contribution from the workers was essential. It was even agreed upon. We



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Increased production makes food cheaper and more available on agricultural markets

haven't wanted to rush into that, especially in a situation where money is growing more scarce, but we are ready to implement it at any time. That measure has not been applied in haste.

However, there are problems that we must solve. The social security system has to be backed in some way, as it is something that's growing steadily more expensive, and which, in some aspects, has been abused.

We heard and painfully learned that the number of people retired for total disability has dramatically increased. We have even thought about the idea of reviewing those cases, at least for educational purposes, covering a number of years, because the concept that one third of the retired persons were declared totally incapacitated before reaching retirement age demonstrates disorganization, demonstrates a lack of control, demonstrates the immorality of some doctors who are signing certificates, and the lack of an appropriate mechanism so that retirement for reasons of total disability is granted only in necessary and genuine cases....

Still need to reduce excess currency

There is one thing about which we must all be convinced: we cannot return to the situation we had at one point. We cannot renounce the need to reduce the currency in circulation to suitable amounts, if we want the peso to continue increasing its value, if we want investors who could be our partners to have confidence in us.

That was a movement which was gaining a lot of strength, the demand for investments, advancing rapidly. As I also explained to you yesterday, tourism and other things have been growing, despite the unending pressures and measures imposed by the United States.

Something useful took place with the increased valuation of the peso, the confidence established in those credits, in those loans and everything. And I want you to know that no other country has achieved what we have in terms of increasing the value of its national currency in the course of a year and a half.

This year, 1996, completes almost the second year of that. No other country has achieved it, and when we explain to visitors, businesspeople, that the country achieved that, they can hardly believe that the peso could have gained so much in value....

That boosts confidence, that stimulates loans, financing, joint ventures and all the activities with which we are defending ourselves.

Of course, there are factors which help us. Our neighbors to the North are increasingly making themselves into everybody's enemies; they are more and more hegemonic and arrogant, meriting the whole world's bad will and lack of understanding. And the world doesn't want to be ruled as badly as it is being ruled now, because the United States rules the world but is ruling it badly, and every day more people make up their minds to ignore the United States, to defy it, to fight against it.

This does not mean that we underestimate its strength, which is very great and very influential. But we see the number of disgusted people in the world growing like wildfire, and people are coming up with new ways to invest in Cuba and do business in Cuba one way or another. Since the measures taken by the United States are more and more absurd, we see this sentiment, I

repeat, growing in the world.

The Helms-Burton Act has the purpose of halting all of that, of keeping a single cent from being lent to Cuba, of making sure that no one dares to invest in Cuba....

Conflicts among the capitalists

Of course, there are serious conflicts among the great economic powers. That is a law which was discovered by Lenin a long time ago, the economic conflicts among these countries, and sometimes what they create is a dogfight for markets and raw materials.

No one should think that life is happy, and as I said before — although at one point they were super-euphoric about what was happening, now they are more depressed because of what has happened, despite all the money they spent to dismantle socialism. They see that production isn't going up, but instead production is falling, that their illusions are more and more expensive, that capitalism doesn't solve anything, that not only where there was socialism, but also where there was capitalism, they are going to ruin. So they are embittered by these things, but they are also embittered by their inter-capitalist conflicts and struggles.

All of these things are happening, and meanwhile, the Cuban Revolution goes on, and we can speak of the things we have been speaking of in these days, or have been talking about tonight: not a single school has been closed, not a single daycare center, not a single home for the elderly, not a single preschool, not a single institute or educational facility, not a single scientific center; in fact, there are many more scientific centers now. In some places, we have extra capacity in the schools. Of course, we would have continued to build schools to replace the old ones with new ones, but the ones we have are all in operation....

A country like South Africa has asked for 600 doctors, which it will pay for, at a reasonable price, of course, because a doctor out there doesn't know how much his services would cost in a country like South Africa. The first doctors are already there I think there are 70 — and soon there will be several hundred. They are also going to give a part of the doctors' income to the Cuban public health system.

We can do with doctors what we do with teachers and professors, giving them advanced study courses, converting that scientific strength into an instrument for the medical personnel's further advancement, for retraining, for preparing them more. We had this same idea in the past with other professionals, but the ensuing situation made that impossible.

If there is an excess of professionals, this can be used to retrain, for a year's sabbatical, for all those things. As I said yesterday afternoon or evening, it is much more reasonable to have a person trained as a doctor than to have a lumpen on the streets who doesn't know anything. True, there are much fewer admissions, because we have had to put a limit on admissions in this situation we are in. In a certain sense, we have exchanged quantity for quality, since we have more demanding requirements for entering the universities.

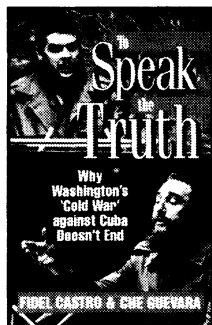
But, well, we have achieved all these things — I repeat — in the context of what is happening in the world, in this country that they left without anything. And I ask again what they would say if they heard the delegates talking here about cutting down

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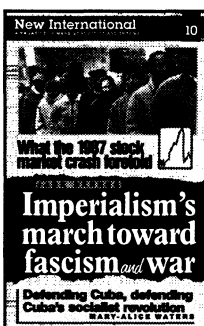


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spiny marabú bushes by hand. Listen, if cane grew as easily as marabú, we could flood the world with sugar. Those bushes grow by themselves! [Laughter]

I had the urge to ask those comrades from Guantánamo and other places when they talked, who planted the marabú? Because it's as if for the past five or six years we had concentrated on growing marabú. And what a brave battle to confront the marabú with a machete and an ax! What a good idea of using it as fuel, like firewood for cooking, for all those things! And what a valiant job!

The things we heard here today were truly admirable. That's why I spoke of the economic and social importance of what you have discussed throughout the year and above all in this congress.

I really admired what I heard about the contingent from Santiago de Cuba that's working in Ciego de Ávila, what it has done, the fact that it has done so through its own willpower and persistence; what the Mambisa Division in Holguín has done, in a relatively short time and in the midst of heavy rainfall; and what the comrades from Guantánamo said about what they were doing; what the comrade from the UBPC said, the one we talked about before, and the other UBPC members who talked here. We heard things we had never heard before, and I know that spirit reigns throughout the country and especially in the rest of the country's provinces. The struggle in the capital is always a little harder, a little more difficult, more problems. But on the visits the comrades from the Political Bureau make to the provinces, all of them bring back very favorable impressions. Some of them, like to go out to the provinces to see the spirit prevailing there, to see that great boost the people are giving.

Before no one could conceive of any project without bulldozers. In any case, we can't send to the Antillana Steelworks the bulldozers [Alfredo] Jordán [minister of agriculture] says he still has left. They would have to get the spare parts. He knows how many spare parts must be obtained in order to get them running. And some of these provinces that make efforts of that kind, if they can hand over a bulldozer or two, they should do so. It's only right, they should have them available.

I want all of you to know that the Revolution bulldozed the marabú areas and planted grass, planted rice, planted cane and planted many things, all kinds of things. I still remember that brigade which, with hundreds of bulldozers, got all the way to Pinar del Río, and the Revolution also built dams and all the things it did. But there were a lot of resources, a lot of fuel, a lot of trucks, a lot of spare parts and money. The miracle is that now we're doing the things we're doing with the resources we have and with the awareness that we can do much more and we can be more efficient....

Must not lose a moment

Not all lands are alike, not all crops are alike. I think Jordán knows a lot about this, along with Comrade Nelson [Torres, minister the sugar industry], in terms of taking any positive experience to the provinces. We can't go crazy and say that we're going to do everything in one year, but we must not lose a minute in extending these positive experiences. A positive experience in sugar cane is the recovery of the land. You can't imagine how much is saved and what it signifies.

Yesterday we talked of millions of additional tons of sugar needed; a large part of that is hidden in the weeds that grow alongside the cane, in addition to a few more hectares that must be planted — and we must plant all we can — as well as the way it is done, the seriousness with which it is done, the application of fertilizers and herbicides, the use of drainage wherever possible. Aside from all these measures and along with all these measures, we can obtain those millions of tons. We have them, they are there, but it depends a lot on us, on our efforts....

The harvest has these problems I mentioned. I can give you a positive statistic, which is that as of today there were 4.150 million tons. [Applause] That means with 350,000 more tons of sugar, we will reach the minimum goal we had set ourselves. We say this is minimum, it all depends on the climate, the circumstances....

It is indispensable for us to achieve these proposed goals, because they also play a part

in all the other things I explained: the confidence in us, the financing, both of which we need so much. That's why this month of May is going to be a month of a lot of work, and very hard work. June and the other months are also important, but this one will be decisive, because we have to cultivate that cane planted in April, which can be cut. Whatever we can plant in the first half of May will be very important.

That's more or less the situation we have in the cane. Now, the problem is also, as I said, to achieve more growth next year, and we can do it if we work with the spirit reflected here and expressed by many comrades — and I repeat — there have been impressive things and impressive results.

Now we're anxious to see what the workers from Santiago de Cuba will achieve in Ciego de Ávila with their cucumber, their cabbage, their early potatoes and all those things. [Applause] We're anxious to see how the quality tests on the outer tobacco leaves come out in other provinces.... We're anxious to see how all the rice growing programs are going, to raise the large portion of the production, because rice is scarce, it's going for almost 500 dollars a ton on the world market, and it was worth 240 or 250, and sometimes even with money you can't buy it. So we must work with great speed in all the rice paddies and we need some resources.

We are also progressing in citrus. A set of formulas have appeared and we are going to continue searching for formulas which allow us to find more jobs, more resources for the country.

We have gotten an excellent impression from the construction workers, who were receptive to the things that were pointed out to them, and clear prospects can be seen in all of that.

The sugar workers have had a marvelous response, and things had also been pointed out to them. And what we wanted to say is that we can't win this battle, we can't overcome this special period if we do stupid things, or we're negligent, or we lose faith. There was really no reason why the seed banks and other things were lost, when they should have been preserved.

No hesitation in discussing wages

So we've gotten through these years, which were hard and somewhat demoralizing; there were errors, things that were done badly, and there still are and will be in the future. But our struggle must be implacable, we must come out of this congress like a brave army, which has been able to discuss anything. And there was no hesitation in discussing wages, although we know what many workers are feeling at this moment; they have needs, they have less money. Now the produce is a little cheaper in the farmers' markets, but we have to work very hard so that they get even less expensive and so prices don't go up again.

We've made calculations to the point of exhaustion. It hurts us very much to know that there are sectors making a big effort without a great remuneration, such as teachers, health workers. The health and education sectors must have about 700,000 workers in diverse categories, including doctors, nurses, technicians, hospital personnel, 700,000 to 800,000 workers. A small wage raise would mean hundreds of millions of pesos more circulating each year.

We are happy to know that, with the measures taken during the special period and the new forms of payment, formulas of socialist remuneration, with the things we did in agriculture, the creation of the UBPCs and the improvements in the work of the state farms, it is possible to hear that an agricultural worker earned 11,000 pesos in one year working and producing a lot; that the incomes of hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers have gone up in many cases, since they were, in addition, the worst paid in the country. This was an error committed in other times, when some sectors such as agriculture had minimum wages — I remember, it wasn't so many years ago — of 80 pesos a month, and of course that con-

tributed to the exodus to the cities.

Now the situation has changed. It's very good news that so many thousands of people have joined the UBPCs, the state farms, the various plans, and they are building housing, and they even make them from marabú, and we are producing a little more cement, a few more iron rods, and our plans to build about 50,000 low-cost housing units are being met. That wasn't a goal, it was an idea, but it spread rapidly, and we have to see



Militant/Martín Koppel
German workers demonstrate on May Day (top). Landless peasants march in Brazil against U.S. policy toward Cuba, Latin America (left). Capitalists worldwide "are afraid of social upheaval," Castro said.

demonstrated here in this congress, we are in good shape in many things and in not-so-good shape in others.

We don't have an industrial culture, although we

have advanced a lot. Others have the advantage of having an industrial culture in their habits, in their respect for technical norms. We don't have a culture for administration and efficiency, and we have to acquire that at all costs and develop with all speed.

Promote men and women with initiative

We need to promote men and women with initiative, because as someone said, "Oh, if only there were 1,000 comrades like the one from Las Tunas!" I'm sure that in this country there are thousands of comrades like the one from Las Tunas, like the one from Ciego de Ávila, like the one from Holguín, like the one from Guantánamo, like those from any province in the country. We have them, but we must discover them, we must promote men and women with initiative, ideas, determination, character and a vocation for dealing with people, because in the efforts talked about here, the subjective element played a very important role, winning over all of those involved.

We had an experience, which was the war [that overthrew the Batista dictatorship in 1959]. The war was hard, going up and down mountains is hard and the sacrifices are great. Nevertheless, many people joined such a difficult effort. We wouldn't have been able to win the war if we hadn't won over the people. Whoever wants to win a battle, to achieve an objective, must first win over the people, and the moral stimulus is not only giving someone a diploma but saying "good morning," asking about the relative who's sick.

The capitalists, who exploit the workers, have studied a lot of techniques about how to win the sympathy of the workers, they've really studied it. We socialists, who see work as a duty, don't concern ourselves so much about that, or in general, socialists did not pay much attention to the individual. Now we are doing a much better job of combining material incentives and moral incentives. But that comrade could never have had enough money to do the things he did; it was a matter of winning over those who were going to do things with him. He even had to win over the affection of the cows, who were going to give milk to the people of Guayabal.

For a long time we were too optimistic about ideas. Moral incentives were practically the focus, and actually we did many things with moral incentives. What our people have done is tremendous. And what about the 500,000 citizens who have gone on internationalist missions, what have we paid them with? I say this because we cannot underestimate moral influences in the slightest, even, I repeat, wishing someone good morning. This people has done great

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Court overturns antigay measure

Continued from front page

all states the right to move forward and ask for equality in employment, housing, and the political process," said Chai Feldblum, a Georgetown University professor. It means gays and lesbians are not second class citizens, she said. "For the first time the Supreme Court has said that the government cannot justify discrimination simply out of hostility and fear," stated Matt Coles of the Civil Liberties Union.

Numerous protests against implementation of "Amendment 2," as the Colorado measure is known, have taken place since its approval in a state referendum in November 1992. Some 7,000 people from Colorado, for example, took part in the half-million strong gay rights march in Washington, D.C., in April 1993. The measure was also

protested during the massive demonstration commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion in New York City in June 1994 and in other gay rights actions.

The Colorado Supreme Court voted 6 to 1 against Amendment 2 in 1993 and the U.S. Supreme Court agreed later to hear the state's appeal — the first time in a decade an antigay measure was reviewed at that stage. Earlier that year, a federal judge ruled a similar measure unconstitutional in Cincinnati.

The high court decision ignited attacks from conservative and right-wing groups. "Those forces bent on forcing a deviant life style down the throats of the American people have moved a long step forward in making government their pet bully," said Will Perkins of Colorado for Family Val-

ues.

Scalia, who voted against the ruling along with justices William Rehnquist and Clarence Thomas said, "If it is constitutionally permissible for a state to make homosexual conduct criminal, surely it is constitutionally permissible for a state to enact other laws merely disfavoring homosexual conduct."

Scalia was referring to the Supreme Court's other major decision on the issue: the 1986 Bowers v. Harwick ruling that upheld a Georgia "antisodomy" statute, declaring the constitutional privacy right didn't extend to protecting consenting adults from prosecution for homosexual sex in their own bedrooms.

The majority opinion, Scalia said, "con-

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Socialists campaign at pickets, plant gates

Continued from Page 4

day.

Four of the largest meatpacking companies in the US have cooperated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to set up a computerized system that will allow companies to quickly determine if an applicant is eligible for employment. "This is very dangerous because it is a step towards a national identity system. It also allows the bosses to create a verifiable layer of rightless workers who will be mercilessly exploited."

On Saturday, May 25, supporters of the Harris-Garza ticket began the day by petitioning to get them placed on the ballot in Alabama.

In the evening, campaigners went to Oneonta, where Garza was invited to address the audience at a weekly dance for the Mexican community. The Mexican population in Oneonta has been steadily growing for a number of years. While most used to work in the fields harvesting tomatoes, peaches and other crops, more are being hired now into industries such as chicken processing, construction, landscaping, and fabrication.

Speaking during a break in the music, she received warm applause when she encouraged everyone to attend the October 12 national demonstration in support of immigrant rights in Washington, D.C. While there, Garza also taped an interview for a local radio station, WKLD.

Sunday afternoon, eight supporters went with Garza to do some campaigning and petitioning at a shift change at the sprawling Fairfield Works steel mill owned by USX where they sold five copies of the *Militant*, collected petition signatures, and

handed out many flyers.

The final event of the tour was a picnic at a supporters house. Some twenty people attended. Garza encouraged everyone there to participate in the campaigning and petitioning in June, and bring those experiences to the Socialist Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, July 6-9

Three young people signed up for Young Socialists for Harris and Garza. Supporters of the campaign raised nearly \$400 in contributions and \$1000 in pledges for the local and national campaigns during the tour.

Tim Mailhot is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 8285.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

PEORIA

Sexual Harassment and the Fight for Women's Rights. A Working-class Response to the Mitsubishi Motors Controversy. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m. 915 N. Western. Donation: \$4. Tel: (309) 676-2472.

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON

In Defense of Immigrant Rights: Oppose Government Attacks on Democratic Rights. Speakers: Juan González, Campaign for Immigrant Rights; Gary Cohen, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MINNESOTA

ST. PAUL

The Deepening Crisis of Bureaucratic Rule: What The Russian Elections Reveal. Speaker: Doug Jenness, member of United Steelworkers

of America Local 15199, and Socialist Workers Party, author of *The Crisis Facing Working Farmers*. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 2490 University Ave. (Route 280/University exit. Bus route #16) Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

PENNSYLVANIA

PITTSBURGH

ValuJet Disaster. Why Labor Must Lead Fight for Safety. Speaker: Edwin Fruit, Socialist Workers candidate for State Representative 22nd District, member International Association of Machinists Lodge 1976. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

What's Behind the Recent Airline Disasters? Why Labor Must Champion the Fight for Safety. Speakers: Mary Martin Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, District of Columbia and member of International Association of

France protests

Continued from front page

massive workers upsurge that shook the French government last November and December.

Workers in France continue to face attacks on social benefits, downsizing, and attempts to privatize public services. The government has announced new budget restrictions reducing the number of civil servants and blocking wage increases.

On May 22, 1,500 Alcatel workers from Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and France participated in a Paris demonstration to protest planned cut backs. Alcatel's telecommunications equipment branch has announced plans to cut 40,000 of its 95,000 jobs in Europe. The lead banner read "European workers united for jobs."

The same day another demonstration drew about 1,500 marchers to defend 300 undocumented workers who have been demanding regular immigration papers. The police expelled the immigrant workers from a church and a gymnasium they had occupied. Later, the CFDT railroad workers union invited the 300 immigrants and their families to move into an unoccupied rail freight warehouse in Paris. On May 23, the undocumented workers joined the demonstration for a shorter work week

Nat London is a member of the CGT at the Renault plant at Choisy-le-roi.

Machinists Local 1759 at National Airport; Janice Lynn, IAM Local 1759 at National Airport. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th Street NW (corner of 18th Street and Florida Ave., Suite #3, entrance on Florida Ave.). Donation: \$4. Tel: 202-387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY

South Africa: The Democratic Revolution Advances. Speaker: Bob Aiken, Communist League, member AMU-FIME union at Capral. Sat. June 8, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

CANADA

VANCOUVER

Why Quebec Has the Right to Independence. Speaker: Bev Bernardo, member Communist League. Fri., June 7, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

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—CALENDAR—

IOWA

DES MOINES

Video and Reports on the Convention of Cuba's Labor Movement and May Day March. Sat., June 8, 2 p.m. Franklin Ave. Library, 5000 Franklin Ave. Sponsored by Iowa Network on Cuba. For more information, call (515) 277-9535 or 281-0779.

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON

Cuban Documentary Film "Gay Cuba." Discussion will follow. Tue., June 11, 7 p.m. Sponsored by the U.S. Cuba Youth Exchange and the July 26th Coalition. Jamaica Plain Art Center, 659 Center St. JP. Donation: \$5. For more information, call (617) 288-6624 or 492-8699.

Britain

LONDON

Marx-Engels-Lenin Walk. A celebration of the lives of the founders of the modern working-class movement. Sun., June 9, 10 a.m. Meet at Tottenham Court Road tube station. (South side, Oxford St. entrance) Cost: £5.50. For further information and advance tickets, call 0171-928-7993. Fax 0171 928 7970.

Greece

ATHENS

The Struggles of the Peoples of the East Against National Divisions, for Unity and Freedom. Speaker: Ma'Mud Shirvani. Thurs., June 6, 7:30 p.m. 16 Sina St., Bank Workers Union Hall. Sponsored by International Forum and Network of Movements for Political and Social Rights.

Great fun — The ValuJet concept, explains cofounder Lewis Jordan, is “a low-fare, no-frills, fun and friendly” airline. Its official air-traffic-control nickname is “critter.”



Harry Ring

Looking the other way works fine — “It would be one of the worst ideas in the world to take the idea of promotion away. The idea of being a policeman on the corner doesn’t work.” — Federal Aviation Administrator David Hinson, defending the idea that the FAA is supposed to both promote the airline

industry and ensure flight safety.

They forgot which century we’re in — Club Med and American Express are being sued for \$5 million by organizers of an African-American African American Summit held in Senegal last year for staging a minstrel-type show. Two white singers in blackface were into their second number when ordered off the stage.

Racism has always been rational — The death of illustrator Garth Williams recalled the controversy he sparked with “The Rabbits’ Wedding,” a book he wrote and illustrated.

It dealt with the marriage of a black rabbit and a white rabbit. The Alabama White Citizens Council branded it as promoting integration and it was removed from the Ala-

bama library system.

Life sure punctured that idea, right? — “The idea that capitalism and labor are not meant to complement each other was espoused by Marx. According to his gospel, it’s always necessary to have a reserve army of unemployed people in a capitalist system so that fierce competition among workers would keep the price of labor low and maximize corporate profits.” — The Hartford *Courant* fuming against Wall Streeters who see it the same way.

Maybe, but a lot of people do — With Big Apple apartments in short supply, landlords are demanding that prospective tenants provide iron proof of income, credit rating, etc. And they want renters with an annual income about 48 times the

bandit-level monthly rent. An operator of an apartment listing service says, “Of course there are places that will take you even if you have a bad credit rating or not enough income. But you probably wouldn’t want to live there.”

Obviously — The Catholic Supply store in New York reports a steady sale of miniature plastic statues of St. Joseph. Folks trying to sell their home bury one in the lawn, hoping it will help. A priest at the Catholic Information Center in Washington says he sees nothing wrong with the ritual, as long as there’s no superstition involved.

Is they talking q....s? — California’s Lt. Gov. Gray Davis and University of California president Richard Atkinson defended the

recently exposed practice of University of California officials giving special consideration to student applicants related to wealthy donors. “There have to be some exceptions,” said Atkinson. Argued Gray: “I would recommend that maybe half of 1 percent [of admissions] be accorded to the chancellors.”

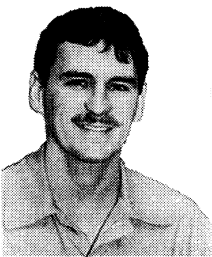
“Qualified by life experience — After eight days on the job, William Luster was bounced as Boston’s transportation commissioner. He had neglected to tell City Hall about two recent parking tickets — one for blocking a handicapped ramp while in town for the job interview. His earlier record included at least five speeding tickets and three accidents.

— FROM BEHIND PRISON WALLS —

Framed-up unionist receives dozens of letters

BY MARK CURTIS

FT. MADISON, Iowa — Without a doubt, mail call is the high point of every prisoner’s day. Getting a letter is a reminder that a person with a real life is thinking about you and that they’re holding your place in line until you can get back in it.



Mark Curtis

That’s assuming you get mail. Sadly, there are many who go a long time between letters. That isn’t the case with me, though. In over seven and a half years there’s only been a handful of days when the postman didn’t deliver. Lately the guard brings an armload of it to my cell, and I get a lot of good-natured kidding from other prisoners that the reason they didn’t get anything is because “Curtis got it all.”

Since getting my parole last November the letters were congratulatory, and then after Illinois resisted accepting me the tone was outrage at my continued imprisonment. The letters come from all over: New Zealand, Canada, Greece, Sweden, Mexico, Australia. During the big strike wave in France I got many letters from there as the

Militant and literature about my case got around among the protesters.

I do appreciate the letters — they have a good political impact on all the hands they pass through (by way of censorship), and especially on mine. It’s my hope that I’ll be forgiven if I don’t respond to all the letters, and that the thoughts in this column will be considered as a way of response.

A couple of the most interesting letters I received lately are actually from other prisoners. Roger Warren is a framed-up Canadian gold miner and union militant. He writes from his cell in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, “I’ve followed your story with great interest for several years and this latest chicanery by the parole board and Illinois state officials has raised my incredulity to new levels.

“In cases like yours, which is without a doubt an attempt to silence a social activist, this not so subtle message seems intended to make others bow their heads meekly and not interfere with the ability of big business to do as they please.”

Louisa Frazier dropped me a card after the protest march in Sioux City, Iowa, against the police murder of her daughter Kimberly. “It seems we’re all in this unfair fight against this system. When are they gonna wake up and give us a break? In your case I hope soon. Whatever or however long this takes; with the help of the medicine of many I know I will fight for justice until my dying day,” she pledges. The fight for justice for Kimberly Frazier is not just a campaign against police brutality but for democratic rights for Na-

tive Americans like the Fraziers. Louisa’s son was recently transferred the penitentiary here and we have discussed this question several times.

The many letters I’ve received span not only the globe but the generations as well. Mildred Solem of Duluth, Minnesota, sent me a card that really put my fight in perspective. “I am in my eighties, Mark,” she said, “and I was there when the leaders of 544 and the SWP went to prison for speaking out against the war, and I worked with their families while they were imprisoned. Those were dark days....” She is referring to the “Minneapolis 18,” the revolutionary unionists and socialists who led the fight to organize the truckers in the 1930s. They were railroaded to prison by President Roosevelt for their twin campaigns for the union and against World War II. What an honor to hear from a participant in that struggle!

The Minneapolis 18 focused on their political education while they were locked up. I got a letter from a friend here who is in

disciplinary lockup that shows the Minneapolis 18 have their descendants. “Greetings comrade Mark,” he begins, “Hope this legal letter finds you in strength. I received the book *Lenin’s Final Fight* from the library and I want to send you my thanks for the good looking out.” Having had many conversations with this man over the years, I knew he’d enjoy the latest of Pathfinder Press’s volumes on the history of the Russian revolution, but I didn’t expect to hear what he said at the close of the letter:

“Before I close I also want to tell you that four of us over here have study groups on Marx’s *Capital*, Volume I. All four of us ordered the book so now once a week we get in the back air vents and go over and study what we’ve read within that week. So we are doing pretty good over here as far as studying goes. But anyway, stay strong and continue to be a revolutionary. And may you have prosperous days ahead upon your release. Peace.”

I can’t wait ‘til these guys get out of lockup.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



HOUSTON — Nearly 600 Chicanas and Latinas from every part of the country attended a national conference — “La Conferencia de Mujeres por la Raza” — held here on May 28-30. The impressive turnout for this conference was twice that originally estimated by the conference organizers. This was the first national conference of Raza women ever to be held, and as was stated several times during the weekend, it was an extremely successful, important and historic event.

The Saturday session began with a keynote address by Grace Gil Olivarez entitled “Machismo — What are We Up Against?” Afterwards, we broke up into workshops. Both the morning and the afternoon workshops drew up resolutions and were followed by plenary sessions at which the resolutions were read.

Among these were “Sex and the Chicana,” “Marriage: Chicana Style,” “Feminist Movement: Do We Have a Place in It?” “Women in Politics — Is There Anyone There?” “Choices for Chicanas: Education/Occupation,” and “Exploitation of Women — The Chicana Perspective.”

One underlying theme throughout the weekend’s discussions was that although Raza males are severely oppressed, women are oppressed both as women and as a part of La Raza. There was also a general rejection of the “traditional” role that the woman has had in Chicano culture.

One of the most important concepts expressed in these workshops was that women must control their own bodies in order to control our own lives. Point VI of the “Sex

and the Chicana” workshop resolution, for example, states: “Free, legal abortions and birth control for the Chicano Community; controlled by *Chicanas*. As Chicanas we have the right to control our own bodies.”



June 8, 1946

NEW YORK, May 30 — At an emergency meeting held tonight at its headquarters, 18 Allen Street, the Indonesian League of America protested against brutal mass roundups by the U.S. government of Indonesian residents of the United States. They are being incarcerated on Ellis Island in preparation for immediate deportation.

Many of the Indonesians arrested or in danger of apprehension are married men with families, some with American wives, who have lived and worked here for many years.

These deportation roundups follow the six-month imprisonment on Ellis Island of 178 Indonesian seamen, who last October struck Dutch ships in New York harbor. They refused to man these ships loaded with arms and ammunition destined for use against Indonesian fighters for independence. These Indonesian seamen and others have now been ordered to leave Ellis Island for San Francisco, where on June 11 they are scheduled to be herded aboard ship and deported.

Fearing that the arrested Indonesians will be put aboard a Dutch vessel which will take them to concentration camps in Borneo and New Guinea, the Indonesian League is demanding that the U.S. government guarantee their safe conduct to Indonesia. In telegrams sent tonight to President Truman, Attorney General Tom Clark, Secretary of State Byrnes and the immigration authorities, the League urged that the deportees be put on an American vessel with the guarantee that their destination will be Indonesia.

MOVE leaders sue Philadelphia

BY NANCY COLE

PHILADELPHIA — Eleven years after the city assault that claimed 11 lives in the MOVE house on Osage Avenue, Ramona Africa — one of only two to survive the inferno — testified for the first time about the events of that day. On May 13, 1985, police dropped a bomb on the house and allowed the ensuing fire to destroy it and 60 other houses in the Black community.

Five hundred cops descended on the home, supposedly in response to neighbors’ complaints and to the presence of a rooftop bunker. The city-appointed MOVE commission concluded in 1985 that the police fired 10,000 rounds, in addition to dropping the bomb. Trapped in the house by police gunfire, only Ramona Africa and 13-year-old Birdie Africa were able to escape.

No one was ever formally charged or tried, with the exception of Ramona Africa, who was convicted of riot and conspiracy for the 1985 disaster and spent seven years in prison. The current trial, now completing its second month, takes up three lawsuits seeking punitive and compensatory damages. One is by Ramona Africa, one by family members of the late MOVE founder John Africa, and the third by the owner of the MOVE house, whose son was killed in the assault. The defendants in the case are the City of Philadelphia, former fire commissioner William Richmond and former police commissioner Gregore Sambor.

On the stand, Ramona Africa relived the day’s events after explaining MOVE’s un-

popular actions — which included blaring loudspeakers in the neighborhood — as attempts to draw attention to the injustice of the 30-100-year sentences meted out to nine MOVE members after a 1978 confrontation in which a police officer was killed.

The defense strategy of the city and its former officials centers around portraying MOVE as dangerous and bizarrely unpopular with neighbors. The city also aims to portray those bringing the lawsuits as greedy and only interested in money they are seeking.

Under cross examination, Ramona Africa was asked many times if MOVE obtained city permits to build the bunker on the roof in an effort to portray the group as lawless. Police Chief Sambor’s attorney, John Morris, even demanded confirmation from Africa that MOVE’s diet included raw eggs and raw chicken. Africa explained the bunker and other fortification of the house were defensive and denied that the MOVE house was the armed camp it is presented as being. She charges that city officials murdered the 11 members of her group.

The trial comes in the context of a massive police scandal here, where almost weekly disclosures point to a pattern of official lies and frame-ups. Some 116 criminal convictions have been overturned since the 39th Police District scandal erupted last year.

Nancy Cole is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Pennsylvania Attorney General. She is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1776.

Support civil rights for gays

The following statement was released May 30 by James Harris and Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice-president of the United States.

We condemn the latest attacks on democratic rights by President William Clinton who said he will back nationwide curfews for youth under 17 and sign a bill institutionalizing discrimination against gays by banning "same-sex" marriages. The White House made these announcements shortly after a Supreme Court ruling pointed in a different direction.

The Supreme Court decision overturning an anti-gay amendment to the Colorado state constitution was a victory for working people and all defenders of civil liberties and democratic rights.

The Colorado provision would have legalized the exclusion of a layer of the population from enjoying full civil and human rights because of their sexual orientation by banning laws prohibiting discrimination against gays.

The ruling reflects the resistance by broad layers of the population to rolling back democratic rights, and shows the support that exists for ending discrimination against gays. Since its passage in 1992 tens of thousands demanded in actions across the country that the amendment be struck down. Clinton's recent statements show once again that working people can defend and extend our democratic rights only by organizing such actions in the streets, independent of the capitalist parties.

Barely two days after the high court decision, Clinton jumped on the bandwagon to sanction discrimination against gays when he agreed to sign the Republican-sponsored bill outlawing "same-sex" marriages. He didn't want to be left behind Robert Dole, one of the principal sponsors of the reactionary legislation. Clinton did the same by throwing his support behind dusk-to-dawn youth curfews the day after Dole pushed for such measures during a campaign stop in California. Those who still look at the Democratic fox as the "lesser evil" to the Republican wolf have fresh reasons to reconsider.

Clinton, Dole, Supreme Court Justice Scalia, and company attempt to whip up emotional energy against social norms and values that are changing in a historically pro-

gressive direction.

The scapegoating of gays and lesbians is one of the basic attacks on democratic rights fostered and promoted by rightist figures like Patrick Buchanan, Ross Perot, and increasingly by all capitalist politicians.

These mouthpieces of capital point to the "breakdown of the family" as one of the principal causes of poverty, crime, or homelessness. They try to blame gays, single women, "welfare cheats," immigrants, and other social layers for the effects of the social breakdown caused by capitalism. In fact, anti-gay propaganda and legislation is part of maintaining the oppression of women. The rulers' "pro-family" campaign aims to reinforce the idea that health care, child care, and other basic needs are the individual responsibility of each worker — not social questions that should be a right for all.

The attacks on the civil rights of homosexuals contained in the bill barring same-sex marriages, or laws like the Pentagon's ban on gays in the military, cut away at the democratic rights that workers have fought for and need today to defend their interests. The same is true for laws restricting young people at home after dusk.

They are made of the same cloth as the recent string of anti-democratic measures such as the "anti-crime," "anti-terrorist," and "sexual predator" laws that will be used disproportionately against working people. These measures try to paint teenagers as a potentially criminal class, turn workers who have served time behind bars into a pariah layer, and make those who look Arab suspect in the eyes of the entire population.

In the same way, the ideological campaign against gays is directed against the working class. Its aim is to make it harder for working people to unite across such barriers as race, sex, and national origin to fight against the capitalists and the disaster their system of exploitation has in store for humanity.

The working class is the only social class that can take the moral high ground in the world today and lead humanity out of the economic and social catastrophe that becomes clearer to millions every day.

Opposition to any restrictions on democratic rights, including the civil rights of gays and lesbians, is an essential banner in this battle.

Imperial troops out of Africa!

"When the people stand up, imperialism trembles," said Thomas Sankara, the slain leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso.

The recent rebellion in the Central African Republic was such a nightmare for the imperial masters in France. They were shocked by an uprising of thousands of workers, peasants, and soldiers who became outraged when Paris unleashed a barrage of firepower on the capital city of Bangui. At same time thousands of working people in France hit the streets of Paris to protest the government's plans for an assault on their social wage. Linking the struggles of the toilers in the two countries against the common enemy in Champs Elysée can be the most powerful blow to the French exploiters.

The *New York Times* and other big-business media went out of their way to paint the rebels as "looters" and "thieves."

Just who are the real looters, the true thieves, murderers, and the plunderers of wealth?

French banks and corporations stash daily the loot from exports of gold, uranium, and diamond deposits in the landlocked African country. While the bloodsuckers in Paris are exploiting these natural resources, the masses of people in the Central African Republic are forced to engage in subsistence farming to eke out a living.

The result? Average life expectancy in the country is

less than 43 years. An estimated 87 percent of the urban population does not have access to safe drinking water.

When the African toilers attempt to improve their miserable existence, the lords in Paris don't hesitate to use massive military force to maintain the domination they profit handsomely from. The rebellious soldiers and other government employees were simply demanding back pay and better working conditions. Their bloodthirsty masters in France responded with their payment: raining bullets on the general population to terrorize them into submission.

Washington didn't stay out of the picture. U.S. Marines arrived in Bangui to reinforce its embassy there. At the same time U.S. forces are stepping up probes for launching a direct military assault in nearby Liberia under the pretext of restoring "peace." At stake there are vast rubber plantations, iron ore reserves, and other resources.

The imperialist rulers will frequently resort to military force to crush strikes, protest actions, and other struggles of the African toilers. But time is on the side of the African people. More resistance to imperialist domination and superexploitation is on the horizon.

The labor movement around the world should embrace the struggles of our brothers and sisters in the Central African Republic and demand that Paris and Washington get out of Africa now.

Court overturns antigay law

Continued from Page 12

tains grim, disapproving hints that Coloradans have been guilty of 'animus' or 'animosity' toward homosexuality as though that has been established as un-American.... I had thought that one could consider certain conduct reprehensible - murder, for example, or polygamy, or cruelty to animals - and could exhibit even 'animus' toward such conduct."

The degree of anti-gay hostility reflected in the Colorado amendment "is the smallest conceivable," the justice wrote in his dissenting opinion. Even though the state had repealed anti-sodomy laws, Scalia added, "the society that eliminates criminal punishment for homosexual acts does not necessarily abandon the view that homosexuality is morally wrong and socially harmful."

The May 22 announcement by Clinton that he would

sign the Defense of Marriage Act fueled the arguments of Scalia and company.

The bill, whose chief sponsor in the Senate is Republican presidential front-runner Robert Dole, defines legal marriage as "a union between a single man and a single woman." The legislation, which has not passed either house of Congress, would thus deny federal pension, healthcare, and other benefits to same-sex couples. It would also absolve states from recognizing a same-sex marriage performed in other states.

Clinton will "sign the bill if it is presented to him as it's currently written," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said at a May 22 news conference. When asked why Clinton opposes same-sex marriages, McCurry said, "He believes this is a time when we need to do things to strengthen the American family."

CTC congress

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work."

Delegates affirmed the CTC policy that there can be no general increase in the basic wage rates under current economic conditions, but workers' income can increase in many sectors through incentives linked to raises in production and efficiency. Valdés reported that up to 1 million workers in tobacco, coffee, rice, and sugar cane production, as well as energy, fishing, and ports now get part of their wages in hard currency or can purchase scarce goods at subsidized rates.

Economic efficiency

"If we are not capable of leading the struggle for economic efficiency, then we cannot represent well our workers," said María del Carmen Coba, a union delegate from Villa Clara. "We must prove that efficiency is not something associated with capitalist enterprise." This point was discussed throughout the congress.

Many delegates gave numerous examples of how workers are playing a more direct role in improving production, productivity, and working conditions, as well as reducing waste and cutting losses by state enterprises. Rounds of discussions at CTC-sponsored workplace assemblies have played a big role in this process, many delegates said.

Luis Romero Diago from the Antonio Guterres Thermoelectric plant in Matanzas, the biggest in the country, explained how workers there have managed to run the operation for 131 days in the row without interruption through meticulous maintenance.

Delegates from a factory in Holguín that manufactures engines for sugar cane combines pointed with pride to new machines they began producing last year that ran well in this year's harvest.

Castro responded that at one time combines operated only with Russian engines, which made possible the mechanization of the entire harvest but were very inefficient. "Those were engines that would stop operating at least four times a day," he stated. "This year, however, the engines we used did not stop as much during the entire harvest... Our factories are beginning to turn out better engines." Financing from Spain has permitted purchasing patents for such domestic production and the import of Mercedes Benz motors.

Castro pointed out several times during the congress that Washington's recent escalation of its economic war against Cuba may cut off access to such technology and capital.

International solidarity

"That's why what happens in the class struggle around the world over the next decade is so important for the revolution," said Felipe Vega of the Chemical, Mining, and Energy Workers Union in Matanzas, during one of the breaks, referring to the comments by Castro.

Vega and hundreds of other delegates were keenly interested to exchange experiences with many among the 1,300 international guests who attended the congress, most of whom were trade unionists. Vega gave a tour of petroleum storage facilities and loading docks in Matanzas to two dozen trade unionists from the United States prior to the CTC convention.

Dozens of similar visits to factories, farms, hospitals, schools, and other worksites were organized by the CTC before, during, and after the convention. On May 2 many of the guests from abroad held a meeting with leaders of the CTC and decided to call an international trade union conference in Cuba in the summer of 1997.

'Armed forces of working class'

"Free education and health care for all are gains of the revolution but the most important gain is that we the workers are in power," said Ana María Díaz Canel of the health care workers union. "We will defend this power to the end." She was speaking at the final session of the congress, where delegates discussed defense of the revolution.

The honored guest at that session was carpenter Osvaldo Díaz who made a suggestion 15 years ago at the second congress of the Communist Party that all Cubans make a voluntary contribution of a day's pay per year to help finance the Territorial Troop Militias.

The militias, made up of 1.5 million workers, farmers, students, and housewives, has become a symbol of Cuba's determination to defend its revolution by arming its people. They were established in 1980 as millions of Cubans mobilized in the Marches of the Fighting People in response to escalating U.S. military pressure against Cuba and the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, which had triumphed a year earlier.

Since 1981 the CTC and other mass organizations turned Díaz's suggestion into a campaign that has become popular among the working class. General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) Raúl Castro, who walked into the hall minutes before the session ended, explained that in these 15 years Cubans have donated nearly 330 million pesos for the militias.

"These are the armed forces of the working class," Raúl Castro said. The imperialists to the north are wasting time if they ponder the loyalty of the Cuban armed forces, he stated, "because the FAR are but a small armed and professional vanguard of this great army made up of millions of men and women in the militias."

The next morning the 1,900 delegates led the million-strong May Day march in Havana, a true festival of the proletariat capping off a year of struggle.

'Cuban workers have taken initiative'

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things with moral force and moral incentives.

I think that now we are happily combining these concepts, in terms of payment for work, at least. I don't know if there is the same concern today about moral incentives as there is for material incentives, but at least in terms of ideas, in terms of concepts, we are clear that they must be combined.

Now I am convinced that there is no moral incentive comparable to what those comrades experienced when they spoke here - many of them - explaining what they had done, the pride they felt. They're like the independence fighters. Everything they did was for honor, patriotism, pride.

Let's combine the two things: people's satisfaction with what they have done and the benefits they and their families can receive from what they have done. I think that also is an important lesson of the special period.

The path is really very clear. I don't want to fail to mention how moved I was to see all the different examples here, and permit me to say that the congress has had great moral and human worth.

It's almost frightening to think about that worker who turned over — and he completed them today — 71,000 pesos earned through voluntary work to defend the country. [Applause] It's even a blow to the excess currency in circulation. He didn't spend it - and this is not a criticism of anyone who goes to buy anything in the farmers' markets - he turned it in. What an example.

Equally moving was the case of the woman from Holguín who turned over 16,000 dollars. And the man from Ciénaga de Zapata, who turned over 20,000 dollars. [Applause]

Don't you think that these examples will go down in history and symbolize this period? And we're not urging other citizens to do the same, it would be inconceivable, that's not what we're asking. But you feel pride and admiration for the human species when you find people so unselfish, so generous....

'We calmly view enemy's maneuvers'

It's admirable how ideas are so powerful that they can be truly invincible. That is why we here serenely and calmly view the enemy's maneuvers, what they could be thinking, and sometimes we even know what they're thinking, but we have the luxury of

analyzing them calmly, serenely. We know they suffer because of what we've done, how we've stood our ground. We know it makes them furious and that rage can be dangerous.

That country is also going through an election campaign which is madness. Politicking reigns, and that makes them dangerous. At this moment, people with the necessary character are not at the forefront. Sometimes we see symptoms of weakness which are amazing. The very fact that this administration would in the end support the cruel, inhumane, brutal and stupid Helms-Burton Act demonstrates an undeniable weakness of character and a lack of ethics.

But I didn't come here to stir you up; on the contrary, I came here to urge all of you and ourselves to be composed, patient, to combine patience with intelligence.

If there is one thing our enemies should know, it was summed up once in a phrase that went: "Intelligence must be accompanied by valor and valor must be accompanied by intelligence." Believe in the Party, in the serenity and composure of the Party, because we clearly see all the maneuvers and provocation aimed at creating conflicts, if possible, since they cannot bear to see Cuba's heroic resistance. Let's say it makes them heartsick.

It seems that everything Cuba has done in these years, the trial it is going through, the successes it is beginning to have, cause very sharp chest pains and heart attacks. And we have such good medications for heart attacks, produced in our laboratories! Streptokinase is excellent and doesn't cause any clotting. [Laughter]

The superpower, always super-arrogant, without — I repeat — the necessary character in certain circumstances, without ethics, is dangerous.

The Revolution's goal is not to win wars, no. Its goal is to win a war if it is imposed on us; but we have no intention of promoting war or of being provoked.

This country's situation is far from desperate, and for that reason we are calm, hopeful, we have no need for conflict. We can win our battles without conflict. That is, we do not want war, but no one better get the crazy idea of taking military action against Cuba, even with illusions about their technological resources. No one better get the notion that they could force this people to its knees.

No one should get carried away with the notion that this country can be humbled, or



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Workers at May Day demonstration in Havana express determination to oppose Washington's attacks against the revolution. "Down with Helms-Burton," sign reads.

that we wouldn't be able to fight for 100 years and all the years necessary. [Applause]

We want and need peace in order to continue with this heroic work, but no one should get the idea of interfering with the effort we're making, or trying to destroy what we're doing, no one should get the notion of provoking us, because we have accomplished feats up until now, but this people is capable of feats much greater still. [Applause]

This defines our policies. Our Party, our country have an excellent leadership team, in the Party and the government, in the CTC, in the mass organizations. We have everything necessary to achieve our objectives and we have the will to accomplish them.

We want all those millions of children to be able to benefit from what we are building today. Anyone who attacks Cuba's interests is not attacking our interests. We do not fight principally for ourselves, but for children such as the one we saw here today; we are fighting for our young people, for our students, and we want to nurture our dream that one day they can live in a country like the country we know we are capable of building. We cherish the illusion that all that hope expressed to us by our illustrious visitors will never be betrayed, and that the

symbol Cuba has become will be maintained. We didn't want Cuba to become a symbol, but the symbolism stems from our duty and our need, plus our enemies' hostility and hatred at the fact that we want to do what we consider just and noble, because what we want is the best not only for our people, but for all the peoples.

That is why we like to call ourselves internationalists, socialists, Communists. [Prolonged applause] And they are going to respect us more because of it, since those who betray their ideals are not respected, those who betray their principals have never been respected and will never be respected. For that reason, we are certain that Cuba will be respected, Cubans will be respected, our people will be respected. [Prolonged applause]

There are three things that fortify us, which have become very clear since the Central Committee plenum and since this congress: the expression of what we have wanted to be, of what we are and of what we will always be. [Applause]

Therefore, with true pride we can all say today, so that no one can doubt it:

Socialism or death!

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death]

Venceremos! [We shall win]

— LETTERS —

Air safety before profits

In the wake of the ValuJet crash that killed all passengers and crew earlier this month, even the big-business press is forced to admit the relationship that has made the "Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] too cozy with the airlines and airplane manufacturers that it regulates." (Wall Street Journal 5/17). The Journal says the FAA is supposed to protect the airline industry and the public alike. However, this is impossible. One cannot have it both ways, maximizing public safety and airline profits at the same time. They also point out that FAA employees get perks (free transportation) from the airlines, and that "investigations by the General Accounting Office and a Senate subcommittee indicate that FAA inspectors are instructed not to go too hard on the airlines."

All the airlines, union organized and non-union alike have curtailed safety as part of their drive for greater profits. There are fewer ground service workers per flight, and all workers are forced to work longer hours for less pay under concessionary contracts. Union officials sit on boards of directors to further tame us and hog-tie us to the company game-plan and anti-worker inter-company competition.

Unions must take the lead in fighting for safety, but all workers, union or not, have it as their responsibility to expose unsafe measures that endanger all of our lives. This is necessary if we look at the increase in railroad accidents and oil

refinery explosions. Only we can be the guardians of safety for ourselves and the public. Your recent editorial was right to the point.

I and other airline workers, members of the International Association of Machinists, from the U.S. recently returned from Cuba where we participated in the national congress of the trade union movement. We had a meeting with airline workers from Cuba, Colombia, and Argentina at the José Martí Airport. Those of us not from Cuba spoke of the cutbacks in airline safety because of massive layoffs, privatizations and union-busting that is sweeping the industry. We saw how different it was in Cuba, where through increases in productivity and efficiency organized and carried out by the unions to aid the whole country, safety is not compromised. The difference is workers hold the reins of power in Cuba.

Mark Friedman
Los Angeles, California

Mao and China

I wanted to write a brief letter about the "Discussion with Our Readers — The Chinese Revolution" column in the May 13 Militant. While I very much agree with the basic line and tone of the article by Megan Arney, there is one part that I do not agree with at all. That part is in the paragraph where Arney says, "Mao at first did not outline a road to socialism. He maintained that there must first be a democratic revolution and then a socialist revolution. In this 'two stages' policy, a



Stalinist conception, Mao strove to collaborate with bourgeois forces, subordinating the interests of working people to preserving a capitalist regime."

Mao never outlined a road to socialism, neither in 1949 nor later on. The Chinese Communist Party — the bureaucratic caste of which Mao was the leader — was driven to overturn capitalist property relations in China in the years following the conquest of power in 1949 in the way that Arney describes in the next two paragraphs of her article. The Chinese Communist Party did not at some later period become transformed into a revolutionary,

working-class party. In all fairness, I do not think that Arney ever meant to suggest that it did.

More importantly, the "two stages" policy of the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution is not, taken by itself, a Stalinist conception. There is a section of "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today," pages 37-41, by Jack Barnes, in New International no. 1, which deals specifically with the Chinese revolution, and, I think, deals with it very well. The essential Stalinist conception — rather, misconception — revolved around the "bloc of four classes" idea, invented in 1927 by

Stalin and Bukharin, which meant handing over the leadership of the revolution to the bourgeoisie, just as Arney pointed out.

The question was not whether the Chinese revolution would at first have a democratic, anti-imperialist character. It did. And then, depending on the role of the working class, and the course of the class struggle internationally, whether the revolution could develop, down the road, into a socialist revolution (that is, the overthrow of capitalist property relations). It could and it did. Rather, the question was: which class would lead the democratic revolution? The Stalinist, petite-bourgeois answer: the bourgeoisie. The communist, working-class answer: the working class.

If Arney had simply stated, "Mao did not outline a road to socialism. Instead, in accordance with the Stalinist conception that the bourgeoisie must lead the democratic revolution, Mao strove to collaborate with bourgeois forces, subordinating the interests of working people to preserving a capitalist regime," she would have been more accurate. And thus closer to the truth.

Jeff Hamill

Seattle, Washington

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

London flails at European Union

Ban on British beef spotlights trade hostilities between UK and Germany

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON — An ongoing conflict over the sale of British beef reflects sharpening tensions among the capitalist powers in Europe and is contributing to the crisis of the ruling Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. British Prime minister John Major announced May 21 that London would begin a policy of non-cooperation with the European Union (EU). Major's move followed a vote the previous day by seven EU members to block any easing of a worldwide ban on the export of British beef or beef products. The German government led the anti-British vote, joined by the representatives of Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

Seeking to boost his electoral fortunes and ease divisions in the ruling Tory Party, Major formed a "war cabinet" to advance the new policy. London will veto all proposals that require unanimous votes in meetings of the EU, Major said. One minister said that at EU meetings "If we are there to talk about transport we will talk about beef. If fishing is on the table, we will talk about beef."

David Bostock, Britain's deputy EU ambassador implemented the new policy at a May 23 ministerial council meeting to approve measures on civil protection in man-made and natural disasters. "The British government is obliged to approach today's agenda in the wider context of the crisis on BSE," Bostock said. The statement meant London refused to endorse all three items which were due for unanimous approval.

Meanwhile, London opened a lawsuit against the ban in the European Court of justice on May 24. Right-wing Conservatives opposed to the EU were reported to be "delighted" at first by Major's move.

An easing of the ban had been predicted



by London, which had received "prior assurances of support" that were not fulfilled, Major claimed. During a visit to London the previous week, French president Jacques Chirac had said Paris would support a partial lifting of the ban.

The policy of non-cooperation was greeted by a chauvinist anti-German campaign in sections of the British press. Labour leader, Tony Blair, gave qualified support to the government. Major was acting in the national interest, Blair said, according to London's *Financial Times*.

The ban had been imposed after London announced a possible link between BSE, a brain disease in cattle, and a similar rare but fatal disease in humans. In the wake of that

announcement the beef market in Europe collapsed. In Germany, beef consumption fell initially by 70 percent, recovering to only 55 percent of its previous figure. The *Daily Telegraph* said that "some countries including Holland and Germany have been suspected of exploiting the crisis to boost their own beef exports." Meanwhile the German economy continues to be on the

rocks, with nearly 4 million workers registered as unemployed and public sector workers staging warning strikes.

Before the EU vote, the UK government had agreed to a number of measures, including destroying some 80,000 head of cattle that could be infected with BSE — double the number previously planned. One German diplomat was cited in the *Daily Telegraph* as hinting that Bonn would only lift the ban if London slaughtered all herds in which BSE had occurred.

Within a few days Major's efforts appeared to be unraveling. *The Sunday Telegraph* reported May 26 that Major's "gamble of paralyzing the workings of the European Union may backfire." There were "deep ministerial divisions over the handling of the beef crisis" the paper said, between those who wanted "complete victory" in the "beef war" and those seeking an early solution. *The Observer* reported that right-wing ministers were ready to resign if Major retreated. The paper also reported opinion poll findings of 51 percent blaming Whitehall for the beef crisis, while a new grouping was being formed within the Conservative party to support British membership in the EU.

Arguing that Britain cannot leave the European Union, an editorial in the May 18 *Economist* said, "Leave aside the costs that withdrawal would impose on Britain's economy. Leave aside also the questions it would raise about Britain's role in the world. It is simply not practical politics."

Opponents of the EU, including James Goldsmith, a billionaire who has formed a new party calling for a referendum on Britain's membership, were living in "cloud-cuckoo land," commented Bryan Nicholson, the outgoing president of the Confederation of British Industry, in a May 21 speech.

Vancouver: Communist League announces candidate

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — At an election rally held at the Pathfinder Bookstore here May 10, Dan Grant announced his candidacy for the Communist League in the May 28 British Columbia provincial elections. Grant, a member of the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union, is a production worker at Domtar Packaging in Richmond.

"Your struggle is an important example to all workers and my campaign brings you complete support," said Grant when he visited independent fishers occupying the Canadian Federal Government Fisheries and Oceans offices in downtown Vancouver May 15. This action was one of a half dozen occupations across the province protesting the federal government's "Mifflin plan."

"This plan is going to drive out the small fishers and corporatize the industry," explained Ross Wetzel, an independent fisher and member of the United Fishers and Allied Workers Union (UFAWU). A sign saying "Save our salmon — Stop Mifflin" adorned the wall.

The Mifflin plan, in the name of conserving dwindling salmon stocks, would limit the area that a fishing license can cover. Fishers would be forced to buy several licenses at a prohibitive expense to be able to fish the entire coast, effectively driving them out of the industry. "This has nothing to do with conserving the salmon stock," added Wetzel.

"This occupation has brought us together, Native and non-Native, fishermen and fisherwomen," said another UFAWU member, Barbara Groening. "Native fishers will be hit hardest by this plan."

On May 18, Grant spoke at an all-candidates meeting in Vancouver, organized by the Committee For Equality For Immigrants And New Canadians and the U.B.C. Law Students Legal Advice Program.

In addition to Grant, candidates from the Green Party, the Reform Party, The Liber-

als, the Communist Party, and the governing New Democratic Party (NDP) spoke. The NDP is a social democratic party.

The Communist League candidate was the only one to call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, an end to the federal government head tax for new immigrants, and solidarity with the members of the Canadian Autoworkers Union on strike against CLS Catering, the majority of whom are immigrants and women.

The CLS Catering workers went on strike on May 14 at the Vancouver Airport against concessions and a wage freeze demanded by the bosses. From day one, the employer hired goons who physically tried to intimidate the strikers and used racist epithets.

"It's in the interests of working people to defend immigrant rights. The bosses scapegoat immigrants for the economic crisis to justify the existence of a second-class layer in society. It's capitalism and the drive for profits that is the problem, not immigrants," Grant stated.

"We need to fight to raise the minimum wage, and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to create jobs," Grant said. "The economic crisis will continue no matter who is elected. The important thing is to rely on our own struggles and build solidarity with all those resisting."

In response to a question on Native rights, Grant said that "Canada is a prisonhouse of nations, of Quebecois and Native people

who are oppressed. We in the Communist League defend Native sovereignty unconditionally. The NDP and the Liberals' answer to Native struggles is to send in the cops. Reform Party leader Jack Weisgerber calls for taking out the guns to deal with Native blockades."

Strikers at the CLS Catering picket line gave a friendly response to Grant as he and his supporters visited the strikers two days later.

"It's important that we stand up for our rights," declared striker Arlene Labrador, a former student activist in the Philippines. "The manager called us a bunch of Philippine nannies and stupid drivers," Labrador explained. "But we're fighting back."

Pathfinder a big seller at Tehran fair

BY MARCELLA FITZGERALD

TEHRAN, Iran — "These are fighting books." The comment was made by a visitor to the Pathfinder stand at the 9th Tehran International Bookfair held here May 7-17. More than 2.3 million people from all over Iran visited the bookfair, making it one of the largest cultural and educational events held anywhere in the world.

In Iran publishers are subsidized by having access to cheap paper and other measures, while foreign publishers are subsidized at the fair by the government covering more than 50 percent of the cost of all the books purchased. Publishers from Lebanon and from India were honored at the fair, with prizes for the quality and quantity of the books they brought. The Lebanese international bookfair, scheduled for April, was canceled due to the Israeli bombing.

Pathfinder's titles were once again welcomed by visitors to the foreign publishers' hall. "Seeing these political books makes me hopeful about life," said one visitor. Some

550 books and pamphlets were sold, for a total of 111 different titles, including the collected works of Marx and Engels.

The best selling title was *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara. All 20 copies were sold before the last day. Some visitors explained to each other who Guevara was.

One person who bought a copy was a young soldier who said he was 100 percent for Guevara because he was an internationalist and a fighter. Another copy was bought by a visitor who bought *New International 10*, featuring the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," last year and was looking for the next issue.

Several book buyers were interested in the titles on war; another asked for books on the foreign policy of revolutionary governments. Theological students bought copies of *Pragmatism versus Marxism* by George Novack and books by Malcolm X.

Interest in the titles on the Middle East was greater than in previous years, with sev-

eral people expressing strong solidarity with the Lebanese people in face of Israeli aggression.

In the final few minutes before the bookfair was over someone purchased a set of the *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*.

Sales of an Iranian publisher's Farsi translation of the article "Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III" by Jack Barnes — originally printed in *New Internationalist* — sold briskly from five different stands in the Local Publishers Hall. One stand sold out its 30 copies of the book in two days. The stall holder said he could have sold 200 copies if he had them.

Mina Saleh contributed to this article.

Pathfinder Distribution London, which organized to take Pathfinder titles to Tehran, has a fund appeal for its expenses at the bookfair. All contributions should be sent to Pathfinder Distribution, 47 The Cut London SE1 8LL UK